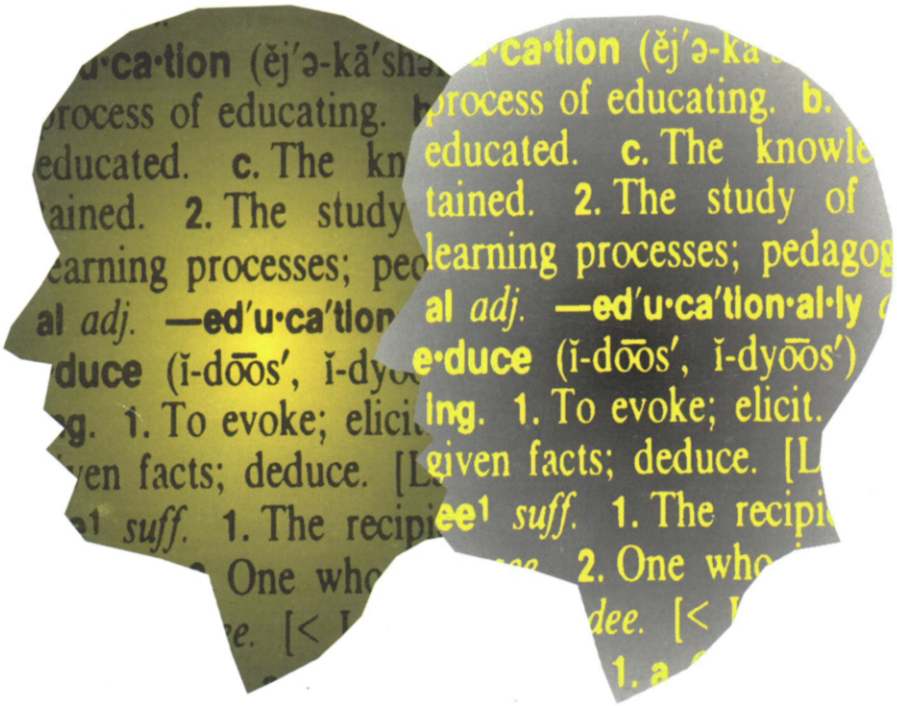

HIGHER EDUCATION EXCHANGE

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1995

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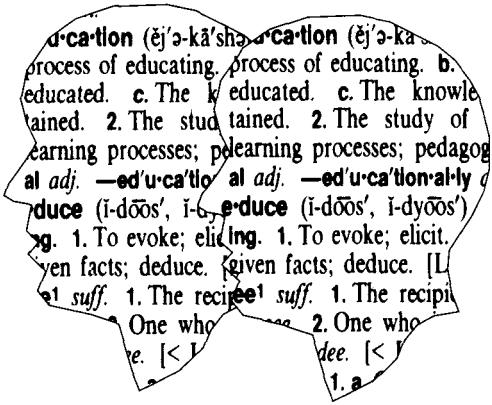

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FOREWORD

By Deborah Witte

When Editor David Brown and I planned the first issue of the *Higher Education Exchange*, we were hoping to engage faculty, staff, administrators, and students in a conversation around issues of importance to the academic community, to establish a rich dialogue about issues on campus. Stories of "hate speech," quotas, and the resegregation of the races on campus had been prominent in the popular press. After talking to colleagues and hearing stories about the deep chasms and lack of dialogue on campuses, diversity seemed to be the right topic for our first issue. The media characterized the debate in a polarized fashion. Drawing from our previous work in examining the body politic, we at the Kettering Foundation realized the discussion could be framed in such a way to bring people together, not further alienate them.

We published a half dozen stories, essays, and articles in our premier issue and invited you, the readers, to join the conversation. And you did, in numbers not expected. You wrote us thoughtful letters; you submitted articles that you had written; you shared your own attempts at publishing collections of essays; and you sent in the names of your colleagues to include in this conversation.

"There is a growing distance between the higher education community and the larger community of the public."

But you did more than that. The articles you sent and the letters you wrote suggest that the specific issue of campus diversity is just the top layer of a more complex issue. There is a growing distance between the higher education community and the larger community of the public. The question at the heart of many of the submissions was this: What should be the relationship between the academy and the public? The college campus is but a microcosm of the whole of society, and any discussion of campus and community is necessarily a discussion about the larger society.

And so we revisit the issue of diversity in this publication, with a selection of five of your responses. Then we turn our attention, and our pens, to the broader topic of the relationship between college campuses and the public.

This second issue begins with two articles written by universi-

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ty faculty. Michael Roth, in "On a Certain Blindness in Teaching," asserts, "Citizens are not born, they are made, and education in being political is crucial for a healthy democracy. Universities, to be sure, have only a very small role to play in an individual's political formation, and their place in the polity's development of an active citizenry is limited. But they can have an important political function for those who work within them."

In the next article, "Monocultural Perspectives and Campus Diversity," Jane Fried explores the notion of thinking *through* culture rather than *about* culture. Her essay argues that "thinking through culture requires students to imagine the world as it might be seen by a person whose life has been lived from a different position and perspective in society. This is an affective and cognitive process which requires effort, creativity, and vulnerability."

In "Cross-Cultural Experiences in College," Jerilyn Lopez Mendoza, a recent college graduate, explores living in a multicultural campus community. She explains, "The integration model of students working together without caring about race or ethnicity can work. However, the problem with the melting pot model is that everyone ends up the same color."

College administrators Linda Stamato and William Laramee offer two views of conflict and the importance of civility on the college campus. Ms. Stamato, in "The Campus as Community," looks broadly at "curricula, campus life and governance," while William Laramee, in "Resolution Before Conflict," sees the need for "metaphor, narrative, humor, and silence."

The journal then continues with four essays that address the broader question: What is to be the relationship of higher education to the public?

The first essay, "The Public/Academic Disconnect," is written by our editor David Brown. He begins by posing the central premise, "No doubt the crisis [in higher education] is financial, but it arises, in substantial part, from legislators and taxpayers having second thoughts about the kind of returns they are getting on their investment. Many institutions of higher learning are being forced to reexamine their relations to a public that can no longer be counted on to support them as they have in the past."

In the next article, "Making Things More Public: On the Political Responsibility of the Media Intellectual," Jay Rosen, professor of journalism at New York University, asks, "What counts as 'public service' for those of us who do critical studies of mass com-

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munication?" He explores "the proper sphere for our own efforts to understand what the public is or could be" or, in other words, the political responsibility of intellectuals.

Joanne Cavallaro's essay, "The Renewal of Civic Life: One College's Journey," follows. She shares the story of her college, the College of St. Catherine, as it begins to move beyond the rhetoric of renewal, civic education, and democratic action to concretely engage this issue. One of St. Catherine's students, Sara Koch, shares her expectations and observations as the college puts its rhetoric into action.

I hope this issue of the *Higher Education Exchange* and the issue of the public-academy disconnect strikes as sensitive a nerve with you as the first issue did. Again, we invite you to read and respond to the essays and articles in this issue. I welcome your contributions to the conversation. Do you have an article or essay that speaks to the issue of the public-academy disconnect? Do you have colleagues whom you would like to include in the conversation? This conversation will continue with a December publication of the *Higher Education Exchange Update* and will feature some of the responses received. You can reply to David Brown or me by mail to: 200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio, 45459 or by phone at 1-800-221-3657 or by e-mail at kflib@ohionet.org. I look forward to hearing from you.

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ON A CERTAIN BLINDNESS IN TEACHING

By Michael S. Roth

Wherever a process of life communicates an eagerness to him who lives it, there the life becomes genuinely significant.
William James

"Her name was Eve. I have not changed it for purposes of disguise or of protection."

"By Christmas I will be in the hospital." Those are the words I remember best. They bespoke a knowledge that was frightening. She said them with certainty and with urgency. *"By Christmas I will be in the hospital. This has happened before. I can feel it coming."* She stared at me intently. OK, what happens now that he KNOWS. What changes, what remains the same? What will he do with this knowledge? What did I say? I recall some lame questions such as "Are you getting some help?" and "What kind of medication are you taking?" Perhaps they were not so lame as they felt to me at the time. Perhaps they allowed her to continue speaking what she knew and confessing what she did not. In any case, she went on in some detail about her experience with manic-depression (was it yet labeled bipolar syndrome?). The mental hospitals, the recovery, and fall back into normality. The slipping away of that recovery and the excitement and terrifying qualities of that slipping away.

Her name was Eve. I have not changed it for purposes of disguise or of protection. Eve was very ill when I encountered her in my first year of teaching, though it took me quite some time before I realized this. Her aggression in the classroom was, I imagined, like that which one might find among some intelligent people somewhat bored by school, and very frustrated with the decorum of the seminar situation. I had known lots of students like this, so I thought, in my own undergraduate years. She acted out a lot, she disrupted class and then made up for it with incisive or witty remarks. In one week she would not complete assignments and in another she would overwhelm the seminar with the quality and depth of her work. She also changed appearance radi-

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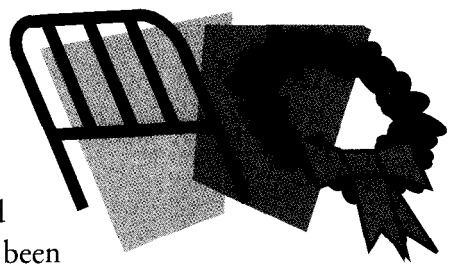
cally during the course of the semester, gaining formidable amounts of weight and then losing much more than she had put on. Eve made her presence felt, but it was very unclear to any of us in the class how we were to acknowledge that presence.

How did I cope with this provocative participation? Rather typically, I think: I rewarded her contributions and punished (with grades, with cutting remarks) her disruptions. It was a serious seminar on "History and Fiction in the Nineteenth Century." We tried to wrestle with questions about how one represents the truth, and with how some decisive nineteenth-century texts developed strategies for responding to historical changes through new ideas about truth and its representation. What counts as true in different contexts? How do we respond to different modes of truth telling and how are these responses mediated by our own histories? How is the attempt to recount the truth mediated by history, and how is our understanding of history mediated by our notions of truth?



By Christmas I will be in the hospital. What counts as true in this context? How was I to respond to this unusually frank and fearfully confident mode of truth telling? I suppose I could have changed the mode in which I had been responding to this student. Like many of my colleagues seem to do when undergraduates express the desire to no longer be a student, I might have adopted the role of counselor, friend, or confidant. These roles might have been helpful to Eve, and they may have established the kind of relationship she was looking for. But I did not move in these directions; I remained the teacher. But what knowledge could we explore that would be able to stand up to her own certainty and fear? What subject could we discuss that would have something to do with what was clearly the most pressing issue for Eve: By Christmas I will be in the hospital.

By the time Eve had started the seminar, she had already developed an enthusiastic interest in Nietzsche. His writings drew her like a magnet, and she hungered for more time with his texts and more guidance in reading them. Our seminar was already planning to read *The Genealogy of Morals*, and I suggested that we meet weekly for a supplementary discussion of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. We read slowly and puzzled out some of the important issues together; or, rather, I should say that she fought her way

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to clarity about some particularly powerful passages. Zarathustra has to descend very far before he can return and before he understands what it means to overcome. Overcoming is never separated from repetition in Nietzsche's work and perhaps this was part of what attracted Eve to his philosophy. She wrote a splendid paper at the end of term and was really pleased with herself, full of pride and achievement. I still vividly remember her gleeful shouts when she received her grade and comments. She did not return the next semester. She was in the hospital by Christmas.

Carol never said much in class, and when she did nobody quite knew what to make of her remarks. She seemed not all that interested in the material for the seminar, a course called "History, Memory, and Desire" in which we read texts from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Toni Morrison on questions of recollection, truth, narrative, and loss. We were reading Roland Barthes' book, *Camera Lucide*, an essay on photography, on representing the past, and on living on after the death of his mother. This is a text, I thought, that 20-year-old students would have a lot of trouble with. Barthes meditates on how we use photography to cope with loss in life, and with how photography changes what it means to cope. Most of my students in sunny southern California did not seem to me marked by loss, and I wondered if this was a book that would just not speak to them.

I had asked the students to each bring in a photograph that was important to him or her (almost all the students were women, since the course was listed at a women's college). We were to analyze these pictures with the phenomenological categories that Barthes makes use of early in his essay. The discussion was excellent. We were all interested in seeing the pictures, and also in hearing about who had what kind of pictures near to their beds, their desks, their phones. One woman spoke shyly and with an air of semi-embarrassment as she talked about a photograph of her grandmother she keeps near to the place she works. One of the men in the class used Barthes' categories to analyze pictures of an old girlfriend, and of his father. Carol raised her hand to speak. She did not have a photograph with her, she explained, but she would like to tell us about one. There were two, really. The first was taken in the spring in her family's backyard. The trees were in bloom, her siblings were smiling. They were a family, a family all together. She explained that this was pretty special since her truck-driver father was not there much of the time. The next picture was

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(she laughed softly, nervously as she said this) taken almost in the same spot (she emphasized these words as if *that* was the remarkable aspect of these pictures) in her mother's backyard. But her father was not there. We could all hear the difficulty she was having in keeping her voice on the pitch of the carefree-young-girl that she was so adept at adopting in class. You see, she tearfully explained, her father had left the family, her parents were split now. She tried hard to smile, *"Sorry, it was just that those photos occurred to me,"* she said as if she needed to excuse herself, *"when we all started talking about photography and loss."* She had lost her father and, in a way, her family. *Funny, there were no flowers in the second picture.*

Now she was looking to me for help. OK, I've said much more than I wanted to, much more than I've ever said before in a public situation. Help! I looked around the room, trying myself to regain control. Carol had clearly said something they all understood, and she had said it in such a way as to pass beyond the conventional emotional content of classroom interventions. And now the students (including Carol) were looking to me to be the teacher, to make it possible to go on as a class. Could it be done while acknowledging the steps Carol just took, or was "going on as a class" dependent on our losing the real force of Carol's narrative of loss?

While meeting to discuss a recent conference on feminism in the 1990s, a group of my students (in this group, all women) began to talk about their feelings of solidarity with other women. The Asian-American and African-American women were talking about how they felt more comfortable with other women of color when there was a political crisis on campus or in the region. The white women (who were a minority in this class) nodded affirmingly, but one of them, Beth, asked with real intensity: "Are Jews white?" I was struck by the force of this question. What was she asking? As I thought about the query and the puzzled response to it, it seemed to me that Beth wanted to know if she was to be allowed into the circle of solidarity; if being a Jew was enough to gain her access to those who believed they "knew how it felt to be oppressed."

One of the issues at stake in Beth's question was what it meant to claim a legacy of oppression and who was entitled to do so. Why would one want to make such a claim? The students were saying that this enabled them to connect with others who would

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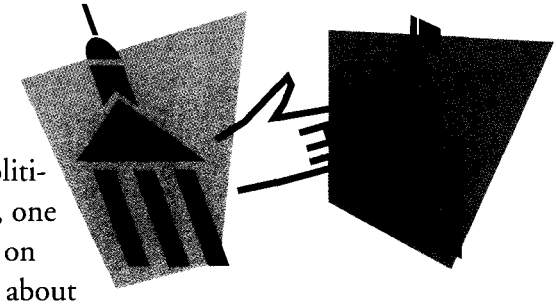
understand them and on whom they could count. Claiming a legacy of oppression thus established what moral philosophers like to call a "we-group," people with whom one identifies and with whom one feels connected. Establishing a "we-group" can be a source of comfort, of defense, and of pleasure. In this regard my students reminded me of my parents, who, when traveling anywhere would immediately search out "landsman" with whom they could sit, eat, or kibitz. These people were no longer perfect strangers. When Beth asked "Are Jews white?" she was asking the others if they considered her a stranger. She wanted into the group, and claiming a Jewish legacy might have been just the ticket.

There are many ways to discuss the politics of education in the U.S. today. Indeed, these discussions have for many taken the place of both serious scholarship and genuine inquiry. Instead, we see well-worn ideological positions refurbished with a university coating. The results are predictable and marketable. Current debates about the canon (canons), about diversity, and about freedom of inquiry and expression are not responses to the so-called politicization of the university but attempts to steer education in particular political directions. Who should be served by the university and how? This would be an important question to pursue, but do we even have the intellectual tools to do so now? Where would we begin?



In the current debates about the lost soul of American politics, "political education" usually means a politicized or ideological education, one based more on prejudice than on reason or facts. This discourse about the university is blind to the necessity and desirability of political education. Citizens are not born, they are made, and education in being political is crucial for a healthy democracy. Universities, to be sure, have only a very small role to play in an individual's political formation, and their place in the polity's development of an active citizenry is limited. But they can have an important political function for those who work within them. How can we ensure that this function fosters democratic political education rather than political corruption? Perhaps my three narratives can help us reflect on this question.

The first two stories evince the attempt to carve out a space

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in which education takes place. This is not exactly a separate, disconnected space, but it is a protected one. When Eve told me that she knew she would be in the hospital before Christmas she was trying (at least in part) to break that space. *How are we going to talk seriously about Flaubert, Michelet, and Marx when it is clear that I am sinking into madness? How can you go on teaching about representing the truth when I have stopped taking the drugs that might keep me from falling apart?* I imagine that almost every teacher hears this question in some form: *What can you possibly have to teach ME?*

Reading Nietzshe with Eve was in no way an attempt "to deal with her problem," if by "problems" we mean her manic-depression. But it was not a denial of her fears about this condition, nor was it an escape from her questions about why she was sinking into a pit she knew and detested. (This was an aspect of Eve's knowing that I found most disturbing. She could see where she was going, but seeing it made no difference in her capacity to change. And her incapacity to change did not block — at least at this moment — her lucidity.) Nietzsche provided us with a language, a rich, complex network of issues to which Eve could connect herself but which did not merely reflect her own, immediate personal concerns. There came a time, I later learned, when Eve could no longer speak a language that any one else could understand. But for a few months, reading Nietzsche allowed us to think together about issues that were of vital importance to her in a way that was open to others. Reading together provided a *mediation* of the personal into the public. Finding one's issues acknowledged in some public way (even if the representative of the public is a notoriously anti-democratic philosopher or merely a teacher in an independent study) is to experience an aspect of the mediation of politics, and perhaps of the attraction of democracy. Finding one's issues acknowledged in some public way is also to experience a crucial aspect of education. (Is it necessary to say that this finding, this acknowledgment, is only a beginning of politics, only an aspect of education? Of course, acknowledgment alone does not solve problems; public recognition is not a substitute for power or for knowledge. There were moments when I believed that our discussions were going to make an important difference in Eve's battle to stay afloat. That was a mistake, or rather it turned out to be a mistake.)

"Reading together provided a mediation *of the personal into the public."*

Carol's declaration in class about her family pressured the

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boundaries of the "public way" we had adopted in the seminar. Was she allowed to talk this way in class, was she allowed to appear this way to her fellow students and her teacher? When Carol and the other students looked to me to reestablish the class after she had said her piece, I like to think that what they were looking to me for was mediation. Was there a way of acknowledging what she said and still continuing with the task at hand: the understanding of the representation of the past on film, especially as Barthes had conceptualized it? Obviously, there is no formula for doing this. One wants to provide the student(s) with the sense that their concerns count in the public context of education, not that any particular student or students dictate the context of education. Barthes, too, throughout *Camera Lucide* is struggling to find a way to address his longing for his recently deceased mother; to use the language of understanding to speak his feelings of loss, and to use his feeling of loss to deepen his understanding. So to reestablish the class or the public dimension of the class, I only had to read Barthes' responses, his calls, back to Carol. She was surprised, I think, to realize that she was already in conversation with the text of this French post-structuralist.

Might this story be relevant to some debates about multiculturalism and diversity? What would happen to our curricula and our teaching if they were capable of responding to the issues and concerns of those students who feel outside of the conversation? Responding to these issues and concerns does not mean focusing the course on a specific politics of identity in order to meet a group's demands to be represented in the class. It means finding a way to enhance our students' capacities to read and think allegorically: to find in a particular set of issues an acknowledgment of their own deepest concerns. Barthes was not speaking directly about divorce nor Nietzsche about mental illness, but their texts could be read to respond to Carol and Eve. There is no formula for this kind of reading either, but it does seem that some of the claims being put forth for participation in education are calls for acknowledgment. For acknowledgment of this kind to take place, one has to want to be part of the conversation, and one has to want to expand the conversation. This will is often lacking on the different sides of recent debates about the university and politics, and without it there is no possibility of a more inclusive political education. An educational system in a democracy cannot afford to be blind to the efforts of citizens to enter and alter the conversa-

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tion that comprises an important part of political education.

When Beth asked "Are Jews white?" she was clearly calling for acknowledgment. She wanted to be recognized as someone who also suffered from oppression, and thus as someone whom the other students would not consider a stranger. The students were talking about solidarity among women of color as a resource for fighting against social injustice. Their shared identities as victims of historical and ongoing oppression was both a tool for politics and a comfort in the face of continued victimization. How was one able to participate in this sharing in the service of changing the patterns of injustice? Was there a form of allegorical thinking that would enable these students to connect with one another without a racial or ethnic common marker?

In the past few years, claiming a legacy of oppression has come to be used not only as a tool to escape from cycles of oppression, but as a vehicle for maintaining one's connection to — even identification with — it. In attaching oneself to a legacy of oppression one may reach for a moral superiority that our culture often awards to victims (that it recognizes as such). This award of moral superiority is no real substitute for justice, but it can be a powerful balm in a world of continued economic, social, and political inequality. Universities and the media have become specialists in providing feelings of moral superiority to people instead of intelligent responses to demands for real social change. In these cultural arenas, officially sanctioned marginality has become a moral high ground, the latest opiate of the people. How can we know if Beth wanted solidarity as a badge of righteousness or if instead it was a "haven in a heartless world" or even a tool for political change?

In 1899, William James published *Talks to Teachers on Psychology: And to Students on Some of Life's Ideals*. The second of the talks to students is called "On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings." The blindness James refers to is our inability to see the values and meaning that other people attribute to their experience of the world (including their experience of us). We are external to one another: "The meanings are there for others, but they are not there for us." James tells of his own wandering in the hills of North Carolina, and his perception of the blight the settlers had brought to the land.

> The forest had been destroyed; and what had "improved" it out of existence was hideous, a sort of ulcer, without a single element of artificial grace to make up for the loss of

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> Nature's beauty.
>
> "What sort of people are they who have to make these new clearings," James asked the "mountaineer" who was driving him.
>
> "All of us," he replied; "why, we ain't happy here unless we are getting one of those coves under cultivation." I instantly felt that I had been losing the whole inward significance of the situation. Because to me the clearings spoke of naught but denudation, I thought that to those whose sturdy arms and obedient axes had made them they could tell no other story....
>
> I had been as blind to the particular ideality of their conditions as they certainly would also have been to the ideality of mine, had they had a peep at my strange indoor academic ways of life at Cambridge.

"People often are blind to one another, closed into their own world of experience."

James talked to students about how people often are blind to one another, closed into their own world of experience, and only capable of (mis)translating the experiences of others into their own terms. He saw a recognition of this blindness as "the basis of all our tolerance, social, religious, political. The forgetting of it lies at the root of every stupid and sanguinary mistake that rulers over subject peoples make."

In his talk to students, James does not discuss how he came to recognize his own blindness, how he came to see how much he was missing. In teaching, we find ourselves blind in some of the same ways that James discussed. We also find ourselves in a position to overcome this blindness (in ourselves and in our students), or at least to recognize it in the public space of education. For Eve, Nietzsche was the vehicle for recognition, for moving from private pain to a kind of public acknowledgment. For Carol, something about the seminar and about photography enabled her to represent her past to others, and to find that the other participants in the conversation were capable of responding to her as a member of the group. For Beth, there was a strong desire to see her fellow students overcome what she thought as their blindness to her and to her commonality with them. Can my experience count for you and can you possibly see how it counts for me?

Teachers are in a privileged position to help others recognize the ways in which we all fail to see, pay attention to, and connect with the experiences of others. This is not only because we can

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give our attention to those groups and issues that have been underrepresented within academia, although this is often a significant task. We can teach students to make use of the levels of mediation provided by education, to think allegorically, and to try to puzzle out the diverse ways that people give significance to their lives. Forgetting the blindness of which James spoke remains a dangerous possibility in teaching, leading to solipsism and to dogmatism rather than to thinking. As teachers, we find ourselves (or should I say we *can* find ourselves) in a position to call attention to this blindness, to show how it works, who it serves. Remembering to look for the "whole inward significance" of another's situation, is a crucial dimension to any inquiry that takes us beyond the comfortable borders of our own we-groups. In crossing these borders we need not only confront strangers; we can also find people who desire acknowledgment and who are capable of returning recognition. In so doing, we can teach our students to become teachers of themselves and others, and to become citizens eager to understand those around them as they understand themselves. Although this is not the only kind of understanding that can be produced in the classroom, it is a crucial one for citizens in a democracy.

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MONOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES AND CAMPUS DIVERSITY

By Jane Fried

American higher education has been dominated by scientific paradigm since the mid-nineteenth century. This paradigm influences all dimensions of our colleges and universities, including teaching, learning, and research. The paradigm assumes the superiority of reason over emotion; objectivity over subjectivity; the independent, noncontextual existence of empirical data; the irrelevance of the observer's perspective to that which is observed; the existence of universal, noncontextual truths; and the primacy of technical and operational concerns over issues of belief or meaning. Manifestations of this paradigm can be seen in a variety of institutional practices. In teaching, learning, and research we can see the enhanced prestige of the "hard" disciplines, i.e., data based, laboratory focused, or lucrative over the soft or economically marginal disciplines like the human services or many social sciences. Faculty seem to prefer cognitive instructional methods over methods which involve either emotion or discussion of multiple interpretations as revealed by students' differing perspectives.

"A paradigm which assumes uniformity in standards for teaching, learning, and research is ill suited to promoting diversity."

A paradigm which assumes uniformity in standards for teaching, learning, and research is ill suited to promoting diversity, whether it is based on gender, race, culture, or any other set of constructs. Nevertheless, many colleges and universities have committed themselves to promoting or celebrating difference and integrating knowledge of culture, gender, and so forth into their curricula. Many institutions have adopted a culture-as-artifact approach, studying about culture rather than transforming the teaching-learning process (Niteo 1994). Celebrations such as African-American History Month highlight the contributions of specific groups to American culture without disrupting traditional teaching schedules or methods.

Even when institutions integrate information about culture

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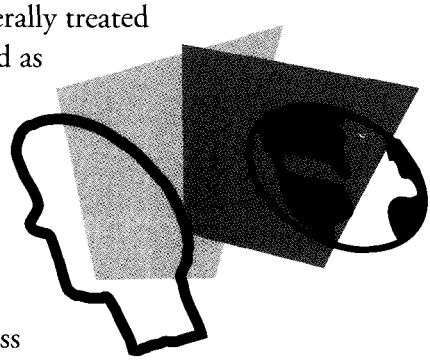
throughout their curricula, approaches are generally informed by positivist pedagogy in which one learns about the information and does not learn to think *through* culture (Stigler, Shweder and Herdt 1990). Learning about culture supports a view of nondominant cultures as Others. Others are defined people with whom members of the dominant culture do not share an essential humanness, whether defined by race, by religion, by belief in the scientific basis of knowing or by any other essential cultural characteristic (McGrane 1989). People who are defined as Others can be excluded, ignored, abused, and generally treated with disrespect because they are defined as lives beyond the pale of the human community. Thinking through culture requires students to imagine the world as it might be seen by a person whose life has been lived from a different position and perspective in society. This is an affective and cognitive process which requires effort, creativity, and vulnerability.



Anglo-American college students are not generally equipped to think through the cultures of various nondominant groups in the United States. Most college students have not achieved a level of cognitive development which permits them to adopt different perspectives from which to analyze data or to understand data contextually. Students have not learned to compare perspectives, evaluate them for utility, or judge evidence from different contextual perspectives (Baxter-Magolda 1992). Most people do not develop this skill until one or two years after college graduation. Kitchener and King (1994) describe this capacity as "stage 6 reasoning" in which students are able to hold firm points of view without acting defensively toward people who hold contradictory viewpoints. From the perspective of cultural studies and critical pedagogy, this ability to shift perspective requires that "people be able to examine their own conditions of existence by adopting a position of nonidentity with their own positions" (Grossberg 1994, p. 13). Without the ability to shift perspective and perceive through other cultures, it seems impossible for students to adopt a position of nonidentity with their own position or to understand with both intellect and emotion the positions of the many Others in their lives.

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A second dilemma faces colleges in their quest to encourage discourse about diversity. Anglo-American students tend to be culturally encapsulated. They see the world through their own cultural lens without realizing that the lens is theirs. They are not aware of American culture or how it shapes their perceptions and interpretation of events. A combination of American cultural characteristics and 12 years of training in American, positivist schools leads our students to the belief that most problems have correct answers, that if enough data can be gathered and analyzed, the right answer will become clear and that emotions have very little place in the classroom and that their perspective is unique to each of them as an individual (Fried 1994).

A recent discussion on a nationally televised talk show ("Sonya Live," CNN, March 1994) is illustrative. Three commentators from Japan, England, and Florida discussed the recent murder of two students, one Japanese, one Japanese-American, in a Los Angeles parking lot. The interviewer asked if countries around the world viewed the U.S. as a lawless, violent country. The Japanese reporter answered yes immediately. She said that Japan has approximately 700 violent crimes a year. The English reporter said yes more thoughtfully, remarking that her country was becoming more like the United States, that is, more violent. The American respondent, a retired judge from the state of Florida, stated that the United States was no more violent than many other places in the world and that if we could get all the criminals off the streets, we would have a safer country. She focused exclusively on individual behavior and did not comment on American culture or the context in which this violence has been flourishing recently. I believe that she reflects a fairly typical, and certainly well-informed perspective on the problem of violence and criminality in the United States.

What follows is a suggested set of techniques that can be used in almost any discipline in higher education and is particularly suited to the humanities, the social sciences, and the human service professions. This process should be integrated into the pedagogy of an entire course, not used one time only. It focuses attention on teaching students to shift perspectives, to identify their own perspective and interpretive processes, and to understand and respect other perspectives. In the process, students begin to realize that their viewpoint is derived in part from American culture. The most important insight is that the American emphasis on individualism

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leads many Americans to conclude that they are people with no context and that their viewpoints are unrelated to the country in which they live, the media they watch and listen to constantly, and the values they have absorbed with their upbringing.

Cultural Education for Anglo-American College Students: A Model

Awareness of Difference

Awareness of difference is the first step in helping members of any dominant group understand the phenomenon of culture. Anglo-American students tend to interpret difference as deficiency. They are trained to look for the correct answers to well-defined problems (Kitchener and King 1994) and are not used to thinking about contrasting approaches as valuable. Showing people different values that exist within their own environment is a good place to begin. Within most American families, there are generally unacknowledged cultural differences related to earlier waves of immigration from Europe. With a few questions about messages which students received from their parents or grandparents about the value of work, the roles of women and men, the meaning of marriage, how children are expected to treat members of their family or what food to eat on various occasions, students become aware that not everybody in America receives the same training in how to live their lives. Contrasting messages from religious upbringing, discussion of the problems of culturally or religiously mixed marriages, and conversation about the differences between the ways that men and women often see things usually yields very productive insights about difference, and the relativity of beliefs. This process focuses the students on learned interpretations and learned behaviors, rather than on supposedly innate differences. This early perception of the relationship between culture, learning, and difference begins to erode the perception of Others as inalterably different.

Role of the Instructor

The instructor models nonjudgmental listening, clarifies points of view, and supports the validity of different perspectives. This is a departure from positivist classroom discussions which tend to emphasize the search for correct answers and to consider multiple perspectives a temporary stage on the road to clarity. The information content of these discussions is not the major focus. The discussion should utilize a "connected knowing" approach

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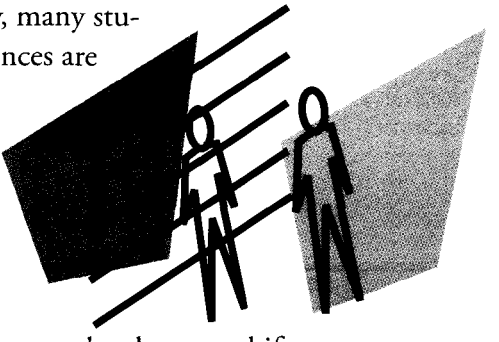
(Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule 1986). Emphasis is placed on understanding different perspectives and learning to become aware when these differences make a student uncomfortable. Students should learn how to acknowledge their own discomfort rather than labeling their peers as deficient or strange.

In a recent class discussion, two students presented an organizational intervention which they were conducting at a nearby Greek Orthodox seminary. Two seminarians who attended the class explained that the male student body on their campus derived from the Greek Orthodox belief in an all male priesthood. The female students in my staff development class held their breath. I could feel the tension rising in the room. My impression was that the female students in the staff development class didn't care whether the campus climate ever improved in a seminary that denied equal opportunity to women. In an effort to rescue the presentation, I reminded the class that their role in reacting to this presentation was to attempt to understand the culture of the seminary, not to judge its values or practices related to women. The female students exhaled. They needed a way out of their own perspective and cultural assumptions. The class proceeded smoothly.

In addition to acting as a model, the instructor also should clarify differences that are cultural and help students realize that all cultures convey different messages to their members about the major concerns of life. The Greek Orthodox church has certain beliefs about the roles of men and women that it expects seminarians to support, for example. In addition, the seminarians, who were both born in the United States, had some variations in their beliefs about this particular issue that were personal and some additional variations which were directly related to their age, and their lives in American culture and society. Given the value that Americans place on individuality, many students need to be shown which differences are a result of personality and which are more general, related to culture or membership in a specific gender, age group, religion, and so on.



Shifting Perspective

Once students begin to realize that some differences are group related, they need to learn to shift perspective in a self-aware manner. The use of visual illusions which change perception of depth, size and figure distortion,

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figure/ground relationships and present ambiguous or impossible figures that change with the viewer's focus are very effective in helping students realize how their frame of reference shapes what they see. These illustrations are generally value neutral and therefore do not threaten any deeply held beliefs. They do illustrate for students the effect which their own point of view has on perception and begin to undermine the notion of "objective reality" as it pertains to human experience. Simulation games and films, poetry or fiction written from the perspectives of members of different cultures can be used to enhance students' understanding. Reading or viewing films, books, or poetry must be followed by class discussion so that students experience the process of hearing other interpretations and discussing the origins of those differences. Toni Morrison (1992) has recently written an outstanding analysis of the role of whiteness in the literary imagination, a perspective which she believes is invisible to most white readers.

Role of Instructor

The instructor helps students apply this perspective-shifting experience to concrete situations in their own lives. Typical situations might include a parent's point of view in a recent family conflict, a roommate's viewpoint about a controversial issue, different perspectives which emerge around conflicts within a student or community organization and finally, the differences between a professor's perspective about what's happening in class and the student's perspective. It is important to begin to use perspective shifting in discussions of concrete situations because people at the lower end of various scales of cognitive development tend to understand concrete experiences more readily than abstract generalizations (Kitchener and King 1994). Discussion of students' feelings about this process is important in helping the student manage the discomfort of losing previously secure orientation points and learn to differentiate between personal discomfort and intellectual judgments about the rightness or wrongness of a particular opinion.

Becoming Aware of American Cultural Perspectives

After students begin to realize that "reality" is heavily influenced by perspective, the notion of American culture can be introduced. Focus on American ceremonies and traditions is a good place to begin because these things have concrete elements with which most students are familiar. Typical topics include how Americans celebrate birthdays, how we conduct political campaigns,

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courtship and marriage rituals, commencement rituals, and celebration of national holidays. Discussion occurs in two stages: 1) describe the behavior associated with the event and 2) describe what it means personally and culturally. For example, a birthday celebration can be described as obtaining a cake (making or buying it) for the person celebrating the birthday, decorating the cake, arranging a time when the birthday person and friends or associates can be present, lighting the cake on fire, spitting on it, singing a ritual song, and then cutting the cake and sharing it with all present. Presents are then exchanged and gratitude expressed. To the celebrant, this means that one or more individuals care about him or her, that they want to give the celebrant a pleasant experience on the birthday and that he or she is a valued member of the group. The meaning of the celebration is far more universal than the specifics of the event. Details vary by culture, but the human need to express congratulations, appreciation, or love is universal. It is important that students learn to describe behavior "objectively," and to separate inference of meaning from behavior. It is important the professor realize that this is a skill-development process that does not detract from "covering the material" of the course, but enhances the students' ability to understand the subject matter more thoroughly, the content and the social context of its production. Although specific examples will vary by course, the important issue to remember is that students must learn to separate behavior from inference if they are to develop the capacity for thinking through another culture.

"Details vary by culture, but the human need to express congratulations, appreciation, or love is universal."

Role of Instructor

The instructor must help students separate behavior from inference as a method of helping them realize the effect of perspective on interpreting the meaning of behavior. The instructor should be able to help students make connections between the various concrete traditions and rituals and the abstract national values they embody. Students who are members of any nondominant culture in any class constitute a very valuable resource because they have another perspective on American life. Their perspectives should be solicited and included. The instructor moderates the discussion, supports the right of different people to interpret events through different cultural lenses, and demonstrates respectful listening which is so necessary and difficult to achieve in these conversations. The instructor can also call attention to topics on which class members seem to have achieved consensus and other areas in

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which there seem to be irreconcilable differences of opinion that are derived at least in part from differences in cultural perspective.

Developing Empathy, and Adding Depth to Understanding

Once American students have begun to understand that perception is shaped by culture, and that they have a culture that differentiates them from other human groups, they can begin the process of entering into another person's frame of reference, thinking through another culture and developing temporary distance from their own. Methods for accomplishing this are limited only by the instructor's creativity. The most important element in this phase is that the instructor generate methods by which students can subject what they are learning in class to analysis from more than one perspective. This might include a "compare and contrast" analysis, conducting a debate, interviewing students from non-dominant groups or from other countries about their perspective on a particular issue, or even discussing the issue with their parents and practicing efforts to understand how their parents' perspective on the issue differs from their own.

Role of Instructor

Discussions of this phase should focus on helping students differentiate between behavior and meaning, identifying common concerns beneath cultural differences, being honest about personal discomfort related to some types of differences, and learning methods for handling their own discomfort. Research indicates that prejudice is most effectively reduced when individuals from different groups feel equally accepted in a particular situation, when they come together to achieve a superordinate goal, when they are encouraged to interact frequently, and when they have many opportunities for such interaction (Cushner 1990). The instructor must help students accept and take responsibility for their discomfort, until they can learn to manage it themselves. One of the most serious problems in the nationwide effort of higher education to acknowledge and discuss diversity on campus is the inability of students to recognize legitimate differences of opinion and engage in discourse that leads to greater mutual understanding. In many cases, this type of difference leads directly to physical conflict at best and mutual disregard at worst.

"Prejudice is most effectively reduced when individuals from different groups feel equally accepted."

Other Pedagogical Concerns

The success of this approach depends heavily on Anglo-American students' readiness to become aware of their own point of view as

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one among many. This can be an extremely upsetting process for students who have been encapsulated in their own culture for their entire lives. In many ways it disturbs the basis of their identity since so much of a person's identity is dependent on the messages the culture has given him or her about who she or he is supposed to be. For Anglo-Americans these messages include the superiority of whiteness, a certain measure of wealth, an unchallenged belief in materialism as the source of both valid evidence and personal worth, and the innate superiority of the Judeo-Christian faith. When students experience a direct challenge to any of these assumptions, the indirect consequences are likely to be upsetting and confusing for a long time. This upset can easily provoke negative comments about the instructor's teaching skills and the quality of the course. Therefore, making direct efforts to enlighten Anglo-American students about the cultural bases of their perspective can negatively affect a teaching career. Student learning which occurs in this area is both cognitive and affective and is therefore very difficult to grade in any traditional fashion. A student's progress should be evaluated and regular feedback given as a tool for continuing education. This generally involves long conversations, some self-disclosure from the professor, and an element of personal support for students that is not typically necessary in traditional courses.

American higher education seems to have underestimated the difficulty of helping students understand cultural diversity. New pedagogical methods must be developed which address both content and process and engage students effectively as well as cognitively. Learning about diversity, for Anglo-Americans, is more than learning about in the sense that they have historically learned about mathematics or biology or anything taught from an objectivist, impersonal perspective. Cultural differences are most meaningfully understood intersubjectively, a process that involves learning about self and experiencing the other, recognizing power differences, potential oppression and personal responsibility, being honest about one's privileges and one's resentments. Learning about cultural difference, in the United States particularly, is a revolutionary act. Teaching the dominant group about cultural differences will continue to be disruptive for a long time in this country. No wonder it isn't widely done.

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CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGE

By Jerilyn Lopez Mendoza

Understanding racial and cultural diversity among a student body, or even trying to, can be a full-time job. While I was in school, I spent two years on a "University Committee on Minority Issues," a watered-down title for a study of institutional racism. We met once a week for long, painful, often boring meetings. I learned the definition of institutional activism. While I don't pretend to be an expert, I've spent too much time thinking and writing about this issue (including my honors thesis) to let this topic slide without comment. This is the essential deal: The issue is very complex and difficult to understand.

Among students of color, there is a great deal of tension. See, there's this integration model that was the foundation of our even coming through the doors of higher education. This model has been around for about 30 years or so, and all good, white liberals (including many professors and administrators) believe in it very strongly, as do their kids, whom we now go to school with. Among most minority communities, and in many families, that model still gets a great deal of play and respect as well. So we get to college, and for some of us, it's the first time we're surrounded by white faces, some of whom are interested in "where I come from," in very well-meaning ways. Others want to argue about affirmative action, or illegal "aliens," or bilingual education, because they've never really been around a minority before and want to get their point of view. Suddenly, we're thrust into this position of teacher representative of all minorities/historian, in addition to doing our homework. So what do we do?

We seek each other out for support and understanding. We take courses about our own history because in the midst of all this well-meaning or even mean-spirited dialogue (usually with white students) we realize we sometimes don't even know our own histories, or the histories of public policies that help our communities and we're forced to defend them in hallways; at the dinner table; in

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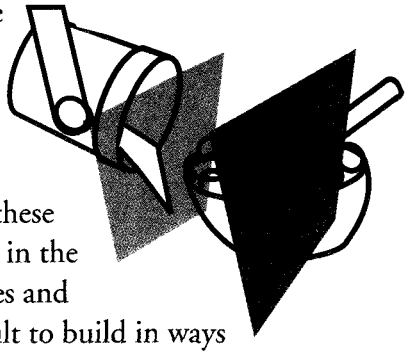
discussion sections. We lean on each other, and cry; use each others' apartments for personal daylong retreats; plan education programs together, protest together, try to survive together, try to graduate together. Then we are separatist creating "ethnic enclaves," practicing reverse discrimination because, don't we know, the integration model is the ideal? We're just not doing our part, we're not playing the game by the same rules.

See? It's not so easy. Even among we students of color there was dissension. Of course, I've simplified the issues tremendously, but I'm trying to prove a point. The integration model of students working together without caring about race or ethnicity can work. However, the problem with the melting pot model is that everyone ends up the same color. Students these days want that salad bowl thing — we're all in the same bowl, but we keep our individual tastes and colors. The salad bowl is much more difficult to build in ways that benefit all students.



How could I, as a 19-year-old sophomore, explain to my classmates that my choice to live in the Mexican-American theme house was not a choice for the forces of evil or separatism? How could I tell them I couldn't explain myself to them unless I understood myself first? How could I explain an explosion of self-awareness and self-identification as a Chicana, when they wanted to share and hold hands and sit in a circle, and I wanted to go dancing with my friends from MEChA?

So what should this look like in the future? How can we build colleges and universities where cross-cultural communication can be useful, positive, helpful, and patient instead of ugly, confused, angry, and resentful? I'm not sure it can be done. With an issue as personal as how a young person thinks and feels about people of different races or cultures, there may never be a right answer. Some initial thoughts:

1. Minority students/students of color have a right to the same educational experiences as their white counterparts. That means if they don't feel like explaining "What does it feel like to be black or Mexican?" they shouldn't have to.

2. Education should include a history of subordinated people in the U.S. — this stuff about the conquerors writing the history books has got to stop.

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3. It's not the responsibility of the students of color to educate everyone else about their histories — *Stolen Legacy*, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, *Occupied America*, and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* can be found in lots of libraries. Students should take more responsibility for their own ignorance.

This is very difficult to put on paper. I don't think I can write much more on this issue without getting angry about old battle scars of my own. Again, I apologize for the roughness of my comments. Let me quit with this: True diversity (or multiculturalism) is not, and perhaps never will be, an easy thing to build anywhere, much less among an impressionable group of young people. We assume it's an easy thing, but it's not. The Army was desegregated by the generation that brought us the Korean War, higher education was desegregated by the baby boomers. Obviously, those methods worked for those people at those times, but the scars of racism run deep. Perhaps we need new models for new generations of leaders in the U.S., and soon. Whatever we've been doing ain't working well enough.

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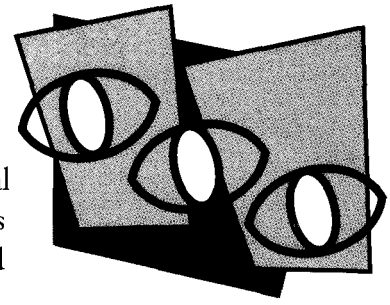
OTHER VOICES:

The Campus as Community

By Linda Stamato

The American college campus is suffering from a malaise and alienation common to contemporary society. Accordingly, whether one measures by alcohol and drug abuse rates; incidents of harassment and even violence; ethnic, gender and racial conflict; or by such indices as rudeness, selfishness and intolerance; the quality of social behavior has deteriorated. Shared experience, mutuality, common understandings and a sense of obligation, those elements believed to have characterized American campuses at an earlier age, have begun to disappear. Indeed, two years ago, the main concern of college presidents according to ACE's *Educational Record*, was how to build "a stronger overall sense of community" on campus.



Campus life has become a matter of public attention as well. Rarely does a week pass without some mention in the press of an incident involving racial intolerance or physical or verbal abuse. Over the last 3 years, incidents of intergroup conflict have reportedly occurred on 175 college campuses.

Public support for institutions of higher learning is not unconditional; it relies on certain expectations with respect to performance to be sure, but also looks for the expression of certain values, say, civility, tolerance, and respect for differences, among others. Too often the current picture falls considerably short.

Colleges are expected to be and, for the most part, I think, would assert themselves to be, premier institutions of civil society. Accordingly, they should be demonstrating how differences can be managed effectively, how common ground can be achieved, and how society can realize the goal of inclusion, an essential element of the democratic ideal. Three areas, at least, deserve attention: curricula, campus life, and governance.

Curricula

A significant social trend toward nonadversarial means of resolving

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disputes is taking place in the United States; college campuses are only beginning to catch up with it. A few institutions offer students professional preparation that incorporates the theory and practice of negotiation and conflict resolution, and serious, interdisciplinary study is increasing. But efforts to link theory, research, and policy are still in a nascent state despite the urgency for training scholars and activists to cope with the increasing complexities of a new world order at home and abroad, to offer nonviolent models for cooperative problem solving and to manage conflict on a variety of levels.

The interdependence that increasingly defines global society demands an unprecedented degree of cooperation involving all levels of government and society. As such, it will entail extensive negotiations to produce economic, political, and social structures reflective of the needs of the era, including managing differences that arise from inequities between and within nations as well as the conflicts, submerged in Cold War times, that are already emerging along regional, ethnic, class, race, and substantive (e.g., environmental) lines.

This shift is significant domestically as well: law, social work, management, and the professions that cover the public policy field (planners, for example) increasingly require research, policy, and practical guidance in negotiation and conflict resolution. Here too, collaborative problem solving and creative dispute resolution can offer a great deal.

Equally important are efforts to prepare students to manage conflict apart from career aspirations. Variously designed as projects to promote citizenship, to provide community service or to develop leadership, several campuses, including those at Rutgers, are undertaking efforts to meld education in civic responsibility with traditional liberal arts curricula.

Campus Life

One effect of the protests of the 1960s and 1970s was to make institutions sensitive to the rights of students. Disciplinary procedures became increasingly formal; concerned with due process and rules, they shaped themselves more and more after the courts in an effort to protect both the institution and the individual. As a result, some of the same problems associated with the courts are found on many college campuses. First, defining disputes to fit within categories of offenses can leave real issues submerged and ignored. Second, since results will often be judgments with sanc-

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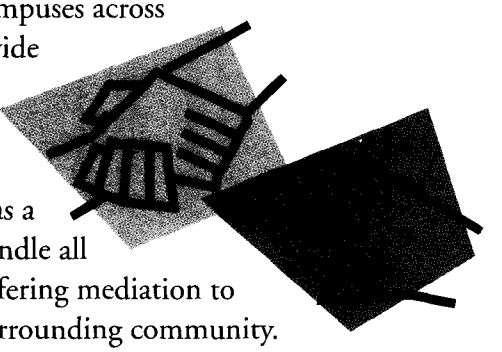
tions imposed, complainants who must maintain social or academic relationships with "offending" parties may be reluctant to inform anyone of the problem, to testify, or to provide evidence. And third, there is incentive to manipulate the rules to win instead of to examine a situation to understand responsibilities, fairness, and concerns from different perspectives. The potential education value of resolving a conflict, inevitably, is lost.

Mediation — voluntary assisted negotiation by a third-party — can offer colleges and universities an alternative to formal legalistic procedures. Approximately 25 campuses across the country provide mediation for a wide range of conflicts involving students, staff, faculty, and community residents, either by incorporating it into the disciplinary code as a first or optional step, by using it to handle all disputes in certain categories, or by offering mediation to all members of the campus and the surrounding community.



The University of Maryland, for example, along with the City of College Park, established a mediation center on the recommendation of its, appropriately named, "Civility Commission." For the last six years, on-campus disputes as well as those involving the campus with the surrounding communities have been directed to this center. At Syracuse University, a similar center, the product of faculty, student, and administration initiative, not only provides members of the campus community with a means to resolve interpersonal disputes, but gives graduate and undergraduate students an opportunity to explore the practical application of conflict resolution theory. Now in its fourth year, the Syracuse center offers workshops in addition to traditional modes of instruction; it also facilitates "town meetings" on campus issues.

Such initiatives follow earlier efforts at the secondary school level to provide for the mediation of disputes that also enabled young people to assume responsibility for dealing with conflicts, supplementing (and in some cases supplanting) formal school discipline. A good deal of experience now suggests that mediation training, and exposure to problem-solving approaches at this level, has a number of important indirect benefits beyond the decline in violence, harassment, and other abuses. Among them are higher student retention rates and improved academic performance.

Conflict is at times natural, acceptable, and essential to

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progress, but a civil society must offer constructive avenues for the expression of conflict. Mediation provides a context to keep conflict from becoming destructive. Mediation offers educators a model for promoting individuals' capacities and responsibilities for making decisions about their lives, for fostering mutual respect and cooperation, and for developing the use of fairness rather than power as a basis for resolving disputes. These are skills people need to address the complexity of individual and collective life. And, engaging in this kind of service involvement in the life of the campus not only serves to benefit the individual and that community directly but, as seems likely, students will stay engaged in their communities once they have graduated, as citizens, and thus contribute to the civic health of society.

Governance

A third area, broadly labeled governance, has to do with approaching decision making and conflict resolution in a less adversarial and confrontational manner and engaging in what David Mathews, the president of the Kettering Foundation, calls "deliberative talk." I take this to mean discourse rather than debate, the kind of talk that leads to identifying interests, evaluating options, and building on common ground. This requires creating the means, i.e., skills and forums, for the community to talk, deliberatively, about issues, about the purpose, direction, organization, and quality of education and campus life.

"A major barrier to achieving satisfactory public life is the very limited set of responses we have to conflict."

A major barrier to achieving satisfactory public life is the very limited set of responses we have to conflict. Higher education, as a setting, is no different from the culture surrounding it. Contentiousness pervades the culture: individuals and spokespeople for groups argue over every imaginable issue while the majority tries to look the other way. Campus life becomes an arena for hostile interest groups articulating polarized positions. Most problems are complex and interrelated, however, and solutions are unlikely to emerge by advocating in outmoded frameworks, from fixed and narrow positions, or by trying to avoid conflict altogether.

From research on procedural justice (for example, E. A. Lind and T. R. Tyler, *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*, New York: Plenum, 1988; S. Merry, and S. Silbery, "What Do Plaintiffs Want? Reexamining the Concept of Dispute," *Justice System Journal* 9:151-179, 1984) we learn that, more than winning or losing, what is important to parties is constructive participation in a process for resolving the dispute. Involvement, and some measure

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of control, deepen a sense of ownership, not only of the process but, eventually, of the solution, as well.

Participatory, collaborative decision-making processes are needed that allow parties who see different aspects of a problem to explore those differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible. Such processes allow the parties to surrender some degree of, let's call it sovereignty, in order to create a richer, more comprehensive appreciation of a problem among those at interest than any one of them could construct alone. (B. Gray, *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems*, Jossey-Bass, 1989).

As has been noted time and again, because democracies tend toward disharmony, they require processes, forums, techniques, and organizations to assist the search for social cohesion. As I see it, college campuses would be more likely to achieve "community" if they relied more on interest-based negotiation and those processes for managing differences, principally mediation, that attempt to identify shared interests and to establish common ground, processes that respect difference but are capable of action. Colleges need to strengthen their civic infrastructure by building problem-solving capacity.

In the Chinese language, the character for conflict combines two others, one signifying danger and the other opportunity. There is a lesson here to be sure, and a challenge as well: if colleges approach the conflicts they face now and prospectively as educational, service and governance opportunities, they may diminish the dangers, and breathe new life into the campus as community.

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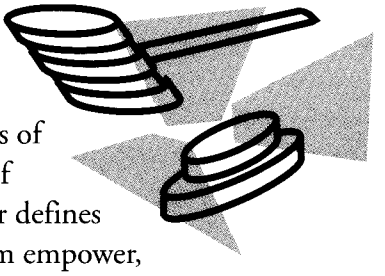
RESOLUTION BEFORE CONFLICT

By William A. Laramee

In my 20-plus years as a college administrator, public official, and nonprofit board member, I've heard more times than I care to the words, "I'll see you in court." Regretfully, I've seen time and again how the threat of legal action creates a mind-set of scoring points versus holding counsel to test ideas and resolve differences.

"I'll see you in court!" has become our culture's way of untangling differences, of making sense of blunders. With increasing frequency, and at tremendous costs to organizations and individuals, people no longer see available organizational procedures as acceptable in settling disputes of individual rights. The use or threat of legal action has become the accepted and expected way to solve a problem, or in coercing the opposite side to cry, "uncle."

Once initiated, cases seem to follow a process of organized strategic deceit until "acceptable terms" are found. What is "acceptable" has little to do with fairness, compromise, or moral credibility. Cases are more typically resolved by what an insurance company anticipates can be won or lost, the eagerness of a party to pursue a courtroom drama, or who can "save face." Words of the disputants become trivialized by the power of the structure itself. Individual integrity no longer defines good or evil, right or wrong. Agents of the system empower, and in the process, the actual disputants become solitary and silent.



It is true that in some cases legal action, especially if a dispute is on the cutting edge of new law or changing public policy or attitudes, may be sensible and appropriate. In other cases, however, a legal settlement only sets the stage for moral compromise and future decision making controlled by intimidation and argument controlled by provocation. Ideally, no legal structure should cancel acts of conscience or serve as a convenient escape to avoid addressing social, educational, or managerial deficiencies.

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A problem that feeds our current legal frenzy may be that leaders have lost, or perhaps never learned, the skills of exercising civil argument — to engage in thoughtful discussion about subtle and complex issues without turning to decision making based solely on rules and not on that of reason.

What new ways of argumentation can be studied in schools and throughout life to allow a language of conscience within the workplace and beyond? With the present emphasis to see disagreement only within the forensic rhetoric of an expected jury trial, we are taught to expect chaos, cynicism, and deceit. The tools traditionally used to influence and to lead, such as logic, rhetoric, or the marshaling of evidence, may not be effective as we move to new definitions in the workplace and world order.

A language of conscience and resolution before legal embattlement requires a level of moral imagination that may best be taught and exercised in the use of metaphor, narrative, humor, and silence.

An evocative, suggestive, meaningful metaphoric image, with its accompanying connotation and nuances, can structure how the self and others see the world and relate to others. Restructuring traditional metaphors to create less confrontational images can become an expressive symbol, rich in possibilities for creating identity, unity, and loyalty.

Metaphors represent a range of administrative assumptions and possibilities that can be revealing and instructive. However, the real promise of metaphors is how they help disputants define common ends and then, we hope, meaningful and professionally appropriate ways to resolve conflict become more evident.

How one tells a personal story says much about one's values and perception of reality. The narrative of life's circumstance defines how one seeks to create meaning and resolve personal and professional conflict. One's life story carries a fundamental integrity that invites another to see, and possibly share, in a personal barrenness which may help adversaries reach a common ground. Basically, narrative can shape the moral imagination and, as a result, cause poor listeners to become empathic allies.

Humor in the workplace has received considerable attention in recent years and is a credible tool for influencing others. Unfortunately, it is often forgotten in time of conflict. Seriousness

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overshadows effective humor and laughter. With the dismissal of humor goes any possibility of seeing that even in life's tragic moments there is comedy, and that with comedy, may come solace and a smile of grace that heals.

"Silence is golden," so the cliché goes. However, it is far from the common practice of our culture, especially in time of disputes. Silence is not just the absence of speech, but silence is effective listening as well — a linguistic skill that must be learned. Silence, when used appropriately, may cause another to talk, and in the process, disputants might discover that what divides one from another may not be so great. Silence used to listen often evokes trust which is the foundation of any meaningful conversation. It is often a point at which ideological differences may be substituted with imagination and caring contemplation. Talk for the sake of talk, or talk to simply provoke others, should be seen for what it is.

Disagreement and conflict without the immediate threat and contamination of litigation, can be a healthy process of people coming together to achieve an enlarged understanding of what is truly important and what matters over time. The resolution of differences must be "permitted" to blur boundaries of who people are, what each person values, and what end-points carry the most meaning and importance. Effective use of metaphor, narrative, humor and silence, though hardly the entire landscape of possibilities for resolving conflict, may help cause the type of discourse that prevents the endless web of litigation and, ultimately, bring conflict to graceful points of resolution.

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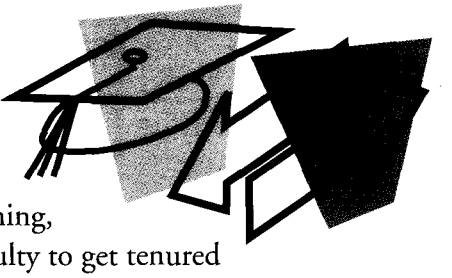
THE PUBLIC/ACADEMIC DISCONNECT

By David W. Brown

The much talked about crisis in higher education is, superficially, one of dollars — more competition for research funds, downsizing of both academic and staff functions, trying to cope with the financial aid needs of students and the deferred maintenance costs of the physical plant — in a political climate that offers no prospect of a bailout with larger public subsidies or dramatic tuition increases.

No doubt the crisis is financial, but it arises, in substantial part, from legislators and taxpayers having second thoughts about the kind of returns they are getting on their investment. Many institutions of higher learning are being forced to reexamine their relations to a public that can no longer be counted on to support them as they have in the past.

For most Americans, higher education has always been a very pragmatic investment — used both for personal advancement and for civic purposes too. Personal advancement still rides high in the saddle. Short of rhetorical flourish, serious civic purpose has not been seen for some time. Each of our more than 3,000 colleges and universities is left to articulate and pursue whatever mission fits its circumstance, and what they do now is serve as necessary vehicles for faculty and student ambitions. Most colleges and universities, however, have no coherent agenda of their own that serves larger public interests. Ernest Boyer, executive director of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, says "The campus is seen as a place for faculty to get tenured and students to get credentialed, but what goes on there is not seen as relevant to many of our social problems."



Where once we educated a small class of relatively privileged young men to serve and govern their communities, now we educate a much larger and heterogeneous cohort with hardly a thought given to their preparation for such civic work. Civic pur-

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pose is, at best, a university's mission to educate for professional employment by which its graduates distinguish and distance themselves from a lay public and then serve that public according to certified knowledge, skills, and self-regulated codes of ethics.

The chasm is especially wide between academics and citizens — too wide for anyone to leap without risking serious injury. Perhaps no other professional world is more removed now from democratic culture than the hierarchies within and among academic departments, in which opinion, anyone's, is valued only to the extent that it has first been certified by an elaborate credentialing process. If citizens are heard, they certainly are not listened to. Thomas Bender concludes that "academic truth" and "political knowledge" are now worlds apart and make it difficult for "academic intellect" to be involved in "democratic culture."

Even those professors who see "politics" and "power" in every text and institution nonetheless pursue their critiques in very orthodox academic fashion. They deconstruct, but they do not communicate with the larger public. They labor for the approval of their peers, but not for the sake of that public. There are clearly rewards for their academic performance, but very little of it benefits the real world constituencies that inspire their scholarship.

The marginality that Boyer speaks of and the chasm described by Bender underlie the supposed crisis that presidents, deans, department chairs, and faculty now must deal with, whether they acknowledge it or not. It is not just their budgets that are precarious, but also their public standing.

On the assumption that a good teacher uses any problem that arises in the classroom as an opportunity to learn, perhaps the crisis in higher education is an opportunity for universities to learn how they can better serve those who have become hostile or indifferent to their interests. Or as Boyer asks, "Is it possible for the work of the academy to relate more effectively to our most pressing social, economic, and civic problems?" Another observer calls it "a fluid moment" and believes that the "downsizing" of many universities may make it possible to get some attention paid to strategies that reconnect universities to the broader jurisdictions in which they are located or which underwrite a large portion of their costs. For Thomas Bender, "The agenda for the next decade … ought to be the opening up of the disciplines, the ventilating of professional communities … that have become too self-referential."

A good way to begin is by encouraging academics to do work

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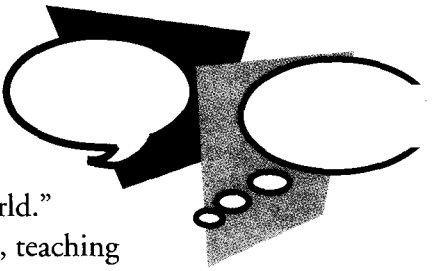
that has practical consequence for public problem solving and to do such work with citizens, not for them. Universities alone or in a regional consortium might establish "civic training centers" to educate graduate students and to reeducate faculty members as to the arts of collaboration with the numerous publics whose participation is essential if pressing social problems are to be solved.

Most problem solving in most organizations and communities is a shared enterprise which some people think of as "politics." If I found myself alone on a desert island, there would be no politics. To be political is to be engaged in a process of analysis and interaction with other people. Independent grounds for judgment surely exist, such as the norms of a methodology or an ideology, but there is rarely any feasible way to enforce them in the political life of organizations and communities. In such venues, academics and those who study with them are called upon to help make decisions rather than discover answers. Whatever their technical skills or ideology, they must be prepared to adjust to public circumstances over which they have little or no control.

A civic training center would be the place to develop "interrogating practices" that help citizens break down and break through the proprietary languages of academics so that their specialized vocabularies can be made intelligible, be reflected on, and used without license by nonspecialists. Fifteen years ago, Charles Lindblom and David Cohen in a remarkably candid report criticized the failure of professional researchers to concede that despite their "specialized investigative techniques, especially quantitative," most of them "inevitably rely heavily on the same ordinary techniques of speculation, definition, conceptualization, hypothesis, formulation, and verification" as are practiced by ordinary citizens. A civic training center would also be the place to promote the equally important practice, so often neglected by academics, of learning to ask "What is it that members of the public know that I need to know, if I am to be of any help?"

Two existing university centers are working examples of how new civic training centers might be organized. The Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the University of Minnesota, and more particularly its Project Public Life, develops and teaches ways "to reengage citizens in the public world." The project's work includes action research, teaching



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methods, organizing and outreach, which combine theory, language, and skills that help citizens to be participants in the everyday politics of problem solving. One significant initiative under way is the project's recent work with service, health, and professional organizations and their staff development programs. Harry Boyte, a codirector of the project, believes that "professional identities," without reform and civic enrichment, are not only unequal to public problems, but present serious obstacles to their resolution.

The Center for Community Partnership at the University of Pennsylvania is an important partner working with the West Philadelphia Improvement Corp., a decade's effort to create and sustain comprehensive community schools. The university does not contribute financial support, but instead, through the center, offers the talent of its students and faculty members to work with children, parents, and others in West Philadelphia. The goal is to create viable "community schools," as social hubs for the entire community. Since those at Penn do not assume that they know how to do that for the residents of West Philadelphia, their center pursues a "Deweyan" strategy that emphasizes "a mutually beneficial, democratic relationship between academics and non-academics." The center is as much learning-oriented as it is service-oriented. Participation is not one-way, but two-way partnerships of faculty members, students, staff, and alumni, with residents — all learning from each other as they share problems and produce better outcomes than would otherwise happen if any one of them tried to do it alone.

Professional reputation is, and will remain, the reference point for those in the academy. That is why they must find a professional reason for being more attentive to civic culture. There is nothing like the experience of academics in real world problem solving to remind them that they still have much to learn or learn anew. It is possible that civic training centers would help to facilitate such learning and, thereby, influence the nature of reforms in graduate education and the research agenda of young scholars.

Whatever civic training centers might do to reconnect faculties and graduate students to the larger public world and its problems, the learning that took place could also be plowed back into teaching and problem solving on campus.

Not only do many academic professionals refuse or fail to connect with real world constituencies, they also set a terrible

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"Although 'civic education' is not acknowledged on most campuses, it is, nonetheless, implicit in campus rituals and routines that are conspicuously undemocratic."

example in their academic hierarchies on campus and the expert-novice distance maintained in lecture halls and classrooms. That is not how people come together in the real world to solve problems. Although "civic education" is not acknowledged on most campuses, it is, nonetheless, implicit in campus rituals and routines that are conspicuously undemocratic. To experience public life and the politics that govern its outcomes means learning to reject the notion that the answers are "out there" in the custody of professionals. Neither are the answers "in here" — the radical subjectivity promoted by well-meaning teachers and facilitators. Civic training centers might help teaching faculty to offer students learning structures in the classroom that resemble the complex organizations and diverse communities which await them. Treating students as consumers of higher education makes each of them feel important, but also makes them ill equipped for influencing events or solving collective problems.

In normal times, the problems of a campus are usually addressed from the top down. Students are transient; some faculty find it hard to collaborate with others as equals; and professional staff is expected to administer the place for those who think that they have better things to do. But one campus observer thinks that it is very important to piece together whatever civic culture exists at any university going through the difficult transition of downsizing, or experiencing other problems that disturb and divide the various constituencies on campus. Such constituencies now find it hard to talk about their differences constructively, finding some group, other than their own, to blame. A civic training center might explore ways in which students, administrators, and faculty members can initiate and sustain a way of talking about the public life and problems that they share. Finding and practicing a democratic language — neither professionalized nor shrill — might help them get on with problem solving together.

Moreover, a public needs problems to work on, not just to talk about. Diversity on any campus enlarges the circle but, as another observer notes, each member of the circle needs a public role rather than merely having his or her "identity" acknowledged. If those in a circle are really to learn how to live with their differences, they need something to do together. Perhaps civic training centers could be places that help campuses move from the rhetoric of multiculturalism to real civic work.

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MAKING THINGS MORE PUBLIC:

On the Political Responsibility of the Media Intellectual

By Jay Rosen

The words on my department letterhead read: NEW YORK UNIVERSITY/A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

What meaning do these words have for someone who professes journalism? What counts as "public service" for those of us who do critical studies of mass communication? Teaching is demanded of us by students and employers; research we produce in abundance. But service is too often an afterthought, or the variety produced by the lip. Granted, there is a healthy tradition of service to the profession: editing journals, reviewing manuscripts, staffing organizations. But who would dare call this "public" service?

I begin with these questions not to inspire a round of self-flagellations, but to find a new route into an old problem in communication studies — the problem of "the public." For all our debates over the nature of the public sphere, one thing we rarely debate is the proper sphere for our own efforts to understand what the public is or could be. What the "public sphere" means, whether it ever existed, who was excluded and why, what is public about public discourse or public space, the relation between private and public — these issues are alive among us. And so they should be, for as Fraser notes, "something like Habermas' idea of the public sphere is indispensable to critical social theory and to democratic practice" (1992, p. 111). By now we have successfully theorized the public, so much so that our debates on the subject have a life of their own. But it is a distinctly professional life, conducted at one remove from the rest of society. Meanwhile, that society has a public life, a complex and troubled one, and it is not clear that our theorizing contributes enough to the resolution or

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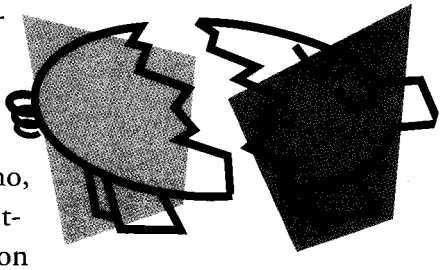
even the common understanding of those troubles.

Intellectuals in Politics

The purported uselessness of academic theory is a familiar and often mean-spirited charge. As Giroux (1994, p. 16) observes, the "raw pragmatism" in such a complaint "slides easily into a form of galloping anti-intellectualism." Quite so. But intellectuals have been known to gallop now and then, and at times their flight to theory can be classified as a retreat into social irrelevance. Perhaps we should focus, then, not on the worth or worthlessness of theory, but on a perennial and more important question — the political responsibility of intellectuals.

In a 1991 essay, Richard Rorty took up that theme and took on his own profession. "The belief that democracy has not been working lately, that the ordinary voter is being tricked day and night, is almost universal among us," Rorty wrote. By "us" he meant "we well-educated people, the intellectuals." While we regularly observe democracy falling short of its ideal, and while we criticize the schools and the media for their assorted failures, "we usually take no blame ourselves."



Rorty's point of departure was that hoary episode from the 1980s, the savings and loan scandal. He observed how the national press distanced itself from any responsibility for the lost billions, quoting a *Newsweek* editor who, after adding up all the news stories written about the issue, dismissed the notion that a "media crusade" could have made any difference. "In the end," this editor wrote, "voters have their own responsibility. The press can lead the horse to water. The horse has to decide whether to drink." Moving to his fellow professionals in the academy, Rorty asked "What did professors of economics, the professors of banking, the deans of the business schools, and the law schools" have to say about the decisions that led to the looting of the federal treasury? Whatever they said, it wasn't enough. "In response to legislation that invited the most brazen rip-off of public funds in the history of the world … neither the American press nor the American academy saw any need to bestir itself."

Just suppose, for a moment, that a few hundred outraged

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professors of economics and banking, joined by a few hundred scandalized professors of commercial law, had, in 1984, picked up on *Newsweek*'s remark that a "lot of thrifts are shooting craps with federally insured money." Suppose they had chipped in $50 apiece and taken a couple of full-page ads in the *Washington Post* spelling out some of the details of this crap shooting, backing up *Newsweek*'s claim this "could ultimately cost the government billions of dollars." Suppose they had offered to serve as a brain trust, a constant unpaid source of data and argument, for *Newsweek*, on condition that *Newsweek* mount a systematic campaign — that is, publish a weekly update on what the S & Ls were up to, and assign lots of reporters to keep up day-to-day pressure on the relevant agencies, insisting that the agencies answer the hard questions about what was going on.

Rorty continued with his fantasy:

Suppose this campaign had been kept up for a solid year, and that more and more local newspapers were incited to run articles on local S & Ls by economics and law professors at local colleges and universities.

"The tools of democracy can enlarge public understanding and stir the national conscience."

"It could have made a big difference," he suggested (pp. 485-6). From savings and loans he veered to postmodern literary theory and its derivatives, criticizing the tendency in cultural studies to academicize politics, abandon a public language, fetishize "difference," and treat "issues of race, class, and gender" as a universal mantra. The journalists who say, "don't blame us," the professors of economics who can't imagine what they might have done, the "subversive" postmodern critics who reduce radicalism to a textual strategy move in widely separate circles. But one thing they share is a separation from their fellow citizens, a willingness to abandon the intellectuals' traditional hope — that the tools of democracy can enlarge public understanding and stir the national conscience. "The press and the professoriate are acting as if both believed not only that democracy has not been working lately but that there is no longer any point in trying to make it work," Rorty wrote. By "redefining the scope of their own professional activity and their relation to democratic politics so as to legitimize this hopelessness," journalists and academics

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alike "are in danger of falling into the role of cynical outsider — someone who always knew, deep-down inside, that democracy was not going to work" (pp. 486, 490).

Scholars as Critics: The Company We Keep

Can democracy work is, of course, the big question lurking in all discussions of the public sphere. But Rorty's essay directs us to another question, in a way more fundamental: What are we — we who study communication — doing to make democracy work? Where does our own work meet up with the task of creating a workable public life? Rorty's piece was entitled: "Intellectuals in Politics: Too Far In? Too Far Out?" It is this debate — over the political responsibility of the media intellectual — that is often missing from our discussions of "the public." Is communication studies in any sense a "public" activity? How public should it be in order to prevent the eclipse of responsibility Rorty warns against? How far removed must it remain in order to achieve that critical distance that creates the role of the intellectual in the first place? For those who style themselves "critical" students of communication, these questions are, well, critical. For as Walzer (1988) observes, "Success in criticism probably has more to do with the place and standing of the critic than with his theory of society or political ideology." In *The Company of Critics* he asks:

> What is the preferred character of critical accompaniment? Some critics seek only the acquaintance of other critics; they find their peers only outside the cave, in the blaze of truth. Others find peers and sometimes even comrades inside, in the shadow of contingent and uncertain truths. … For it does make a difference where the critic stands, inside the cave or out; and it makes a difference how he relates to the cave-dwellers (p. x).

If Walzer is right, then our studies in mass communication, if they are to be both critical and successful, must treat as an open question — an interesting question — the company we keep as scholars and critics. For the "place and standing" of communication studies within the public sphere may matter as much as the brilliance of our critiques, the thoroughness of our scholarship.

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But this is relevant only if we wish to succeed in the critical enterprise. If our aim is merely to proceed, to get on with the business of being academic critics, then "place and standing" will have a purely internal meaning, like the rankings of the nation's top law schools. To be sure, what "success" means in criticism is debatable. In Walzer's view, it is connected to the category of nation. A successful critic writes for and about a "people." The values shared with those people are the grounds for compelling social criticism.

> Though [the critic] starts with himself, he speaks in the first person plural. This is what we value and want, he says, and don't yet have. This is how we mean to live and don't yet live. We criticize our society just as we criticize our friends, on the assumption that the terms of the critique, the moral references, are common (p. 230).

Working "within the framework of national history and culture," the ideal critic "is loyal to men and women in trouble," Walzer writes. "Nation, not class is the relevant unit, even when the critic is most closely attuned to the injuries of class." Thus, criticism does not require automatic resistance to "the pull of the common culture." On the contrary, a sensitive feel for the language of fellow citizens, for the "traditions of common complaint" is necessary, for "if the critic is to speak for his fellows, he must also speak with them, and when what he says sounds unpatriotic, he has to insist upon his own deeper patriotism" (p. 234).

Walzer's vision of the "connected critic" is attractive to many of us, I suspect. We would like to be more than academic voices. On urgent questions that involve the media and the public sphere — and there are more and more of them all the time — it would be rewarding to speak to, and with, our fellow citizens. But how? For those of us in the United States, it is hard to ignore the difficulties of speaking "with" a nation of 250 million, of breaching the gap between popular discourse and sophisticated vocabularies, of finding a literate audience for even the most accessible work, of being a "public intellectual" in a commercial — and at times anti-intellectual — culture (Jacoby 1987). We can always take the easy way out and define the university itself as "a critical public sphere" and thus the proper location for acts of social criticism (Giroux 1994, p. 16). But before we take that unfortunate step, we should

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consider how we got to this point, where "the public" has almost become an academic question.

Intellect and Public Life

"The problem of a democratically organized public" wrote John Dewey (1927, p. 126), "is primarily and essentially an intellectual problem, in a degree to which the political affairs of prior ages offer no parallels." Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems,* for all its faults, remains a kind of nemesis in communication studies, reminding us that we're still off track, still not there, no matter how well we understand the public sphere, no matter how thoroughly we critique that troublesome book's errors and excesses. Like any effective utopia, Dewey's vision of a public reborn through inquiry, discussion, and the flow of "intelligence" exerts a nagging hold on the present, the full promise of which is invisible without it. Every time the media landscape changes — as with the rise of the "information highway" today — we confront again the real but unrealized possibility of a communicating public, a "reality" to which Dewey is our best guide. To say that the problem of the public is primarily an intellectual problem is not to conclude that intellectuals can or should solve it. Rather, it is to argue that intellect's primary place cannot be with intellectuals — not if democracy is our true aim.

"Intellect's primary place cannot be with intellectuals — not if democracy is our true aim."

This is a hard message to accept, and part of the reason is that the message got lost in the rise of the modern research university. In *Intellect and Public Life,* historian Thomas Bender (1993) notes how classical republicanism bequeathed to the forerunners of the modern university a lofty ideal of "civic engagement." The early graduate schools sought "to train men in the 'mental culture' that would prepare them for careers in the 'civil service,' for the 'duties of public life' generally, or as 'public journalists,' " writes Bender. He is quoting the founders of Columbia University's graduate school, which was called the Faculty of Political Science when it was established in 1881. All graduate training was "political" in nature because it prepared men — or rather, gentlemen — for service to the polity. But this vision quickly died because the culture that supported it was already dwindling in late nineteenth-century America.

By the 1890s, most of the products of graduate schools were becoming academics rather than civic leaders, and the mission of the professors shifted "from that of preparing men for public life

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and toward that of reproducing their own academic selves." Bender connects this shift to the "exhaustion of the humanist ideal of a common civic culture" amidst the exploding novelty of modern society, and the rise to acceptable status of the figure of the expert (pp. 130-31). Instead of a single faculty of political science, directing all of its energies to civic life, the graduate school emerged as a collection of disciplines dominated by the natural sciences and the newly influential social sciences. The recognizable features of our own academic life — departments and disciplines, training for university careers, a professional orientation toward scholarly peers — can be traced to this early shift. The ideals of the founding moment were lost.

Bender warns us against an error he says he did not avoid in his own writings. An "anachronistic sense of both the self and the public, of knowledge and democracy" can lead those concerned about both public and intellectual life to overvalue the civic ideal and underappreciate the rise of the professional expert. He writes:

> The legitimization of expertise was part of a larger pattern of recognition of the complexity of modern society and the multiple identities of individuals. One need not be absolutely at one with oneself nor with others in the modern notion of the public. The implications of this shift is the opening of the public sphere to a wider range of speakers. Putting the matter rather sharply in a single illustration, let me observe that while no woman could be a civic humanist, women trained in the social sciences at the turn of the century could be and were very prominent in public life. For all its limits, it is important to recognize that the rise of expertise was embedded in a transformation of the public sphere that, however imperfectly conceptualized and realized, might well be characterized as democratic in its tendencies and potential (p. 132).

Not everyone could be a gentleman. But in theory at least, everyone could become an "expert" with the proper university training. The democratization of the intellect had a better chance with the new ideal of expertise than it did under the elevated but too exclusive notion of civic duty. However, as the old civic ideal faltered, so did the vital connection between intellect and public

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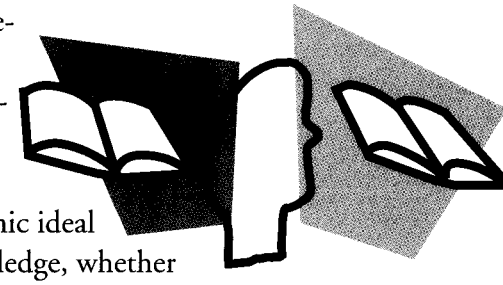
life. Bender notes, for example, how "those academics who spoke directly to the public, as opposed to addressing peers or established political and economic elites," and those "who spoke for a wider range of radical proposals" went undefined in the early battles for academic freedom. A new dynamic was at work: the professionalization of intellect. It succeeded at producing autonomous disciplines, in charge of themselves. It did not produce a public philosophy that would make good on the democratic promise of "expertise" as distinct from "civic virtue."

Instead, professionalization meant an exclusive orientation to one's peers, and to the movers and shakers who might call on academics for expert advice. Authority was established within the discipline, and then applied to public problems through the social scientist's alliance with decision makers in government and industry. "Expertise was not thought to be political," Bender notes. It was professional, a matter of disciplinary training and standing among peers. An "expert" was someone who, having mastered the academic literature, went on to produce more of it. "Investigation and objective data became more important than general ideas. The academic ideal of the unremitting search for knowledge, whether trivial or not, was born" (p. 134-5).



The absence of a strong public philosophy in the newly professionalized social sciences did not go unnoticed. Here is where Dewey's *The Public and Its Problems* (1927) enters the conversation. The book can be read as a ringing cry for a more democratic organization of intellect, and for the sort of intellectuals committed to such an order. As many critics, Reinhold Niebuhr among them, have pointed out, Dewey did not grapple well with issues of power, conflict, and domination (Niebuhr 1932; Westbrook 1991, pp. 524-532). He could also be tantalizingly vague, and too optimistic about communication technology (Carey 1989a, pp. 83, 96; Ryan 1992; Westbrook 1991, pp. 315-6). For these and other reasons, Dewey could not "solve" the problem of how to create a modern public; but it should be noted: neither have we.

Lippmann's (1922, 1925) solution — downgrade citizens to the role of spectator, while allowing experts to take charge of public problems — was rejected by Dewey as a dismissal of democracy

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itself; instead, he reinstalled the public as both the object and the subject of democratic politics (Carey 1989a; Lasch 1990; Peters 1989a, 1989b; Westbrook 1991, chap. 9). Without saying how to get there from here, Dewey pointed modern democrats in the right direction — toward a union of art and science, local connections and national concerns, intellectual discovery and public dissemination, ordered intelligence and summoned feeling. Along this route the public might yet emerge from its "eclipse." As Bender (1993, pp. 136-7) observes, one of the implications of Dewey's approach was to bring the intellectual "into the world in a way that enriched public culture." And of course the man himself, despite a difficult prose style, lived a very public life as the nation's senior philosopher (Westbrook 1991).

Central to Dewey's political philosophy was the pragmatic notion of truth as publicly made (Peters 1989a; Westbrook 1991, pp. 130-137). He sought to "open up the truth-making process, to admit into the process of making public truths a variety of interests and emotional commitments" (Bender 1993, pp. 136). Scholars needed a public identity beyond their professional relationship to other scholars. The search for knowledge meant searching for those common understandings that could be shared with others — other scholars, perhaps, but also other fields, other professions, other portions of the political community, fellow citizens, all of whom are struggling to arrive at public truths through public discussion. Democratic politics is this struggle, said Dewey, and intellect cannot cut itself off from the public arenas where truths are made. The insistence of a political identity for scholarship accounts, I think, for some of the curious power of *The Public and Its Problems*, a text that is both frustrating and fascinating to those who feel cut off from public culture and don't quite know what to do about it.

Going Public: The Imperative of Action

But is the problem of the public really so difficult to act on? Rorty's savings and loan example is meant to suggest not. His image of outraged professors of commercial law finding common cause with editors and reporters at *Newsweek* illustrates what Dewey might have meant by the making of public truths. Professors enter into a partnership with journalists because neither group, operating alone, can turn evident facts into public truths. These scholars become what Walzer (1988) calls "connected crit-

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ics," addressing themselves (and their intellects) to the American people, to whom they feel a natural loyalty. They are also newly connected to the journalists for whom they are serving as a "brain trust," and in negotiating this partnership they must emerge from their own discipline to find a common language with reporters and editors, who in turn must find a common language with *Newsweek*'s readers. It is through this finding process — groups finding each other through public dialogue — that the public may "find itself" as a principle of political life.

"The point is to produce a kind of knowledge that can be had in no other way."

To pursue a public identity as a scholar is not simply to "apply" advanced knowledge to social problems, or to translate scholarship for a lay audience. The point is to produce a kind of knowledge that can be had in no other way. Intellect alive in public life is itself a form of inquiry, just as teaching teaches teachers about the true nature of their subject. Rorty's outraged professors may find that their understanding of the law, previously certified as adequate by their peers, is actually faulty in that it cannot be easily grasped by others for whom the understanding is potentially (and presently) valuable. What the legal mind learns as it negotiates the public arena is the dividend that democracy pays to intellect. It is public service in reverse, so to speak, for publicness is performing the service on professors who need it. Intellect, meanwhile, is pried loose from its cramped location in the intellectual class to assume the form Dewey called an intelligent "state of social affairs" (1927, p. 210). In Rorty's example this means a society that is not being looted by its bankers while it sleeps.

An intelligent state of affairs requires that journalists, part of the society's early warning system, have access to more advanced understandings than their own. The "brain trust" permits them to draw on the important knowledge trapped in the otherwise distant fields of academe. Their reports get more "intelligent" as they learn about the intricacies of banking regulations — but only if they can shed their professional skins, and get excited about the "boring" but spectacularly important material in which the unfolding scandal lies. While *Newsweek* and its brain trust address themselves to political publics on the national level, similar partnerships are operating on the local level, where the savings and loans actually appear in people's lives. Local universities and newspapers are making public truths for the inhabitants of particular places, an essential act if the political community as a whole is to awaken to the danger.

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"The public is not a 'thing,' but a way things should be."

Here, then, is "the public" at work in a busy society where no one can grasp public problems in their entirety. Knowledge becomes "embodied intelligence," (Dewey 1927, p. 210) not all at once, through some magic medium of public communication, and not all in one place, through some all-embracing public sphere, but via many encounters with many publics at many levels, all governed by evolving rules of engagement that constitute the society's shared public ethic. Viewed from this angle, the public is not a "thing," but a way things should be; and making things more public is an important category of ethical action. To act in such a manner requires an intellectual outlook that does not put "democratic practice" at an "immense intellectual disadvantage." Dewey posed the problem as follows: "How should we read what we call reality … so that we may essay our deepest political and social problems with a conviction that they are to a reasonable extent sanctioned and sustained by the nature of things?" (Dewey 1929, p. 853, 849). This is a good example of an "intellectual problem" — avoiding cynicism while grasping reality — that cannot be solved by intellectuals alone because it is shared with everyone in the body politic. The democratic mind always contemplates

> a universe in which there is real uncertainty and contingency, a world which is not all in and never will be, a world which in some respects is incomplete and in the making, and in these respects may be made this way or that, according as men judge, prize, love and labor (p.851).

As Rorty has recently put it, this vision does not imply

> that history is on our side, or that there is any necessary force that's going to cause a good outcome. On the contrary, there are nine chances out of ten that things will go to hell. However, what is important is the hope that they might not end badly, because they are not fated to go one way or the other (Borradori 1994, p. 112).

Let me summarize my argument so far: "Public service" in communication studies begins with an intellectual act: conceiving of an environment where "there is real uncertainty and contingency," and thus real hope. By taking this conception public, so to

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speak, scholars perform an act of public service. Academic understanding earns public credentials when it engages others — other communicating professions, institutions, groups of citizens — as they struggle to arrive at an understanding of the present that "works" for their purposes. Communication studies succeeds at being critical when, in the company of others, it fashions a "we" language that speaks to common values, common problems, a common heritage, a common sense of the historical moment and its possibilities. Here "common" does not mean common within a professional discipline, or a political outlook, but *shared across the boundaries that divide intellect from public life*. Going public does not require the abandonment of sophisticated vocabularies, critical distance, or works of theory. But it does mean trading in those language games that are exclusive to the profession for others that touch upon "the traditions of common complaint," as Walzer put it. This is the political responsibility of the media intellectual: to make a public place for intellect that others can inhabit as they struggle to understand and use the media wisely. When we operate with such an aim we may find that:

> Academic truth and political truth turn out not to be fundamentally different. Politics and inquiry converge in the quest for better truths. Such a notion of truth may make us uneasy — both as academics and citizens — but it may also make it easier for us to be at once academics and citizens in a democracy (Bender 1993, p. 139).

*On the public sphere generally see Habermas (1989) plus the essays collected in Calhoun (1992) and Robbins (1993.) In addition to these, on the media and the public sphere see Garnham (1986, 1993); Hallin (1985), Lee (1993); Peters (1993); Peters and Cmiel (1991). For historical treatments see Baker (1987); Landes (1988); McGerr (1986); Ryan (1990); Warner (1990). On public and private see Elshtain (1981); Benn and Gaus (1983); Pitkin (1981); Sennett (1974). For feminist perspectives, in addition to Benn and Gaus, Elshtain, Landes, Ryan, see Fraser (1992, 1989); Young (1987). On the problem of the public as first framed by Lippmann (1922,1925) and Dewey (1927) see Carey (1987, 1989a, 1989b); Peters (1989a, 1989b); Lasch (1990); Schudson (1983); Westbrook (1991, chap. 9.) For communication perspectives deriving from Arendt (1958) see Glasser (1991) and Habermas (1977). An important text with reference to much of the above is Gouldner (1976).

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THE RENEWAL OF CIVIC LIFE:

One College's Journey

By Joanne Cavallaro

How can we teach citizenship and democratic skills in an environment that is in many important ways undemocratic? Institutions of higher education will have to take this question seriously if we are going to prepare students for public life and democratic participation. Ernest Boyer challenged higher education to create "a new model of excellence" that could "contribute to national renewal" (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 9, 1994). We are called upon by politicians, academes, and the general public to educate students to become active, civic-minded participants in the public affairs of their communities.

The challenges raised by this demand are serious, and difficult, for they require recognition of, and deliberate attention to, the very real and often divisive strains among groups on campus; divisions present not just among students, but among educators themselves. We who are charged with helping students learn the skills necessary for democratic participation in public life must ourselves learn these skills. We must address the divisions that separate us: divisions among discipline, especially between professional and liberal arts departments; between administrators and faculty; and between full-time and adjunct faculty. Unless we do so, unless we take hold of divisiveness itself in a serious, tough-minded way, our allegiance to civic education, diversity, and citizenship will ring hollow if not false.

"Courses on civic education, and workshops on diversity are not enough."

We know that courses on civic education, obligatory student participation in community service, and workshops on diversity are not enough. In order to renew our culture so that the work of educational institutions is redefined as educating citizens — ethical, informed, skillful, participating citizens — we need to address several serious and discordant issues: issues of power, interest, and identity. On many campuses, pressing questions about patterns of

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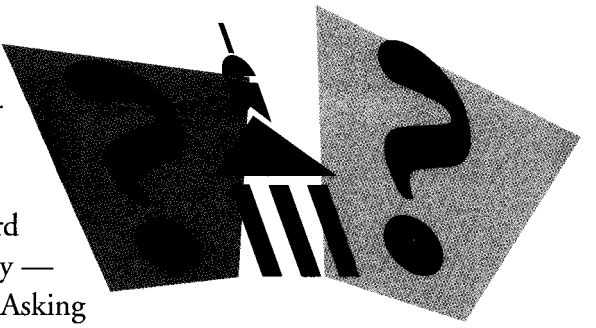
power and governance structures; about the separateness and mutual dependence of institutional, group and individual interests; about identity and the socialization processes and reward structures that help form identity — these questions are rarely asked. Asking these questions often leads to central, fundamental changes, and such changes are always difficult, often threatening, even when we desire them. If we don't face them, however, we are ensuring that our rhetoric about renewal, civic education, and democratic action will remain hollow and devoid of vital action.



The College of St. Catherine has a double heritage that has prompted it to move beyond rhetoric to concretely engage these issues. A women's liberal arts college, the College of St. Catherine was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondolet, an order with a long history of dedication to women's education and community service. The college has long recognized the need to educate women to be active citizens, and this tradition fosters our recognition of how women have been excluded from or marginalized in decision making and civic life. The Sisters of St. Joseph have, in recent years, been struggling to develop a collaborative governance structure, and their example has encouraged the college in its own efforts.

At the college, our journey of self-renewal began in 1990 with the recognition that we needed to reinvigorate ourselves as a community. As with many campuses across the country, there was fairly widespread agreement that our historical sense of community was being eroded. In particular, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the heart and soul of the college for many years, were no longer the cohesive presence they once had been. Societal pressures had intensified to undermine community, and scarce resources and perceived threats to job security exacerbated the divisions on campus. Increasingly, faculty and staff felt powerless to effect change in any substantial way. Several instances of bigotry against students and faculty shook our image of ourselves as a tolerant, caring community.

Five years ago we began attacking this perceived lack of community with an effort to reinvigorate the faculty. After wide

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consultation among faculty across disciplines, Project Colleague was created and eventually funded by The Bush Foundation. The goals of the project were twofold: to create a more collegial and less formal climate among faculty by encouraging collaboration across disciplines, and to improve teaching and learning through interdisciplinary faculty collaboration. At the heart of the project was an innovative way to encourage faculty to see collaborative research and study as integral to their work: interdisciplinary faculty study groups. These groups, funded by the grant, gave faculty a chance to come together to learn about issues of mutual intellectual interest that were relevant to their work as educators. By design, each study group had to include faculty from a mix of disciplines, both liberal arts and professional, as well as faculty who were new to the college. In addition, administrative or student affairs staff could also participate. Issues studied by the groups include feminist pedagogy, diversity in the classroom, the nature of work, citizenship and higher education, and the Twin Cities metropolitan area as a classroom. In all, after three years, close to 60 percent of the faculty had participated in this program.

Project Colleague, and the changing patterns of interaction it encouraged, helped lay a new foundation for our common work. Now we were faced with trying to work collaboratively to solve problems of importance to the entire campus community: creating a new core curriculum for the first time in over 20 years. After several failed and divisive attempts, a committee representing every department on campus was created. Committee discussions were heated, partisan, impassioned, but consensus was finally reached. The difference between this successful outcome and earlier attempts rested on two crucial decisions: to incorporate broad-based discussions that openly encouraged diverse perspectives, and to make these discussions public.

Establishing the work of the committee as public work was critical, for it spoke to framing a vision for the college as a whole, a vision that integrated rather than opposed different perspectives, and one in which people could see their own interests embedded. Members of the committee had two tasks: to represent the interests of their departments and to report back to their departments. The open acknowledgment of the role of self-interest in the common goal, and the public reporting of process and progress, created a large, public stage on which faculty could connect their

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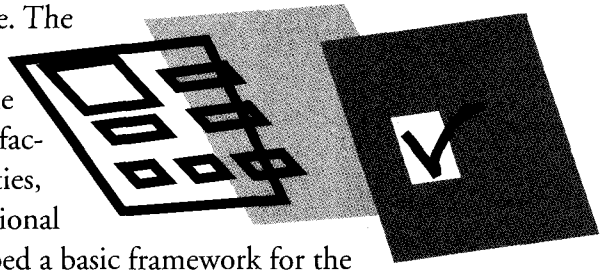
individual work in the classroom and departments to a larger purpose: creating a curriculum that would serve students, faculty, and the college well.

One result of the curricular revision was the creation of a new interdisciplinary course that would be required of all first-year students. Many colleges have such a course; the decision to create one was not new in itself nor particularly controversial. What was new for us was the decision to make both the teaching of the course and the process of creating it collaborative, interdisciplinary and, again, as public as possible. The original blueprint for the course was voted on by the entire faculty. A group of faculty representing humanities, social science, and professional departments then developed a basic framework for the course that was shared with faculty in a collegewide workshop. A second group of faculty from five different departments then refined the plan, which in turn was shared with a large number of faculty from across the curriculum. All in all, faculty from ten departments and staff from student affairs and academic affairs were closely involved in the development of the course.



The assessment process for the course was equally collaborative and public. An assessment plan for the pilot courses taught the fall of 1994 was developed by a group of faculty and staff from the academic dean's office, the learning center, and the music and occupational therapy departments. The plan was then given final form and carried out by different faculty and staff from various departments, student affairs staff offices, and the academic dean's office. Those who participated in carrying out the assessment plan were asked to help shape its implementation.

Individuals were invited to use their particular expertise and creativity to work together across traditional disciplinary lines. Thus, faculty from professional fields such as occupational therapy and business were instrumental in assessing a course whose basic concepts were primarily philosophical. This openness to collaborative assessment built a strong sense of ownership among faculty, staff, and students.

Within this intensely public examination of one particular course, the focus was on formative rather than summative assess-

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ment; the performance of neither the instructors nor the students evaluated. Even so, this type of public assessment of what goes on in the classroom challenges some deeply held beliefs about the nature of the work that faculty do. It raises questions of privacy and accountability: Who has the right to judge what goes on in a particular classroom? To whom are faculty accountable in their work? Which aspects of teaching are public and, thus, open to inspection by the community, and which are matters of individual discretion? Who "governs" the teaching and development of a course so central to the core curriculum? We have not answered all of these questions, of course. We are, however, learning at least to frame them. Thus, for example, instead of posing a question such as, "Should Professor X be invited to a particular meeting?" we are learning to ask a broader question, "Who needs to have a voice in the matters to be discussed at this meeting?"

The public discussions regarding the development and assessment of this course also raised important questions about power and participation on campus: how to balance the need for closure with the need to hear all perspectives; how to engage people as equal participants in common work rather than as complainers and criticizers of others' work; how to envision and talk about power in an educational setting; how to balance curricular and budgetary needs; how to create an atmosphere of mutual accountability; how to create governance and other structures that help rather than hinder collaborative efforts.

The process we went through in developing and assessing the pilot course was not always a smooth one. On many important issues, we are still working toward a consensus. Indeed, several issues remain divisive and contentious, and we continue to struggle for a way to come together around those issues. The process has been successful, however, in raising questions, in helping us to break out of polar debate, and in naming the issues that we need to address.

More importantly, we understand the need for places and structures that can help foster our desire for, and commitment to collegial, civic-minded environment. Interestingly, one of the first structures to benefit from this new attitude of change was faculty meetings. Many faculty members had felt that not enough of their real work was being discussed there. An initiative to restructure the meetings grew out of one of Project Colleague's Faculty Study

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Groups on the nature of work. Eventually, the meetings were restructured to increase effectiveness and accountability and to encourage broader participation. Under this new structure, instead of passively listening to reports, faculty are asked to actively participate in identifying questions of importance to them.

An even more inclusive form for open discussion, one not organized exclusively for faculty, has been created in our monthly community meetings. These meetings, which were first convened in response to two instances of bigotry on campus, have enlarged their focus to include all issues of importance to the community. The meetings are open to all members of the campus community: students, faculty, and staff — anyone with an interest in the issue at hand. They are convened and led by a group of faculty and students dedicated to improving the openness of public discourse on campus. Recently, such issues as the classroom environment, diversity, the Catholic nature of the college, and academic integrity have been discussed. While this group has no positional power, collectively they wield substantial influence in articulating questions of campuswide concern. For example, after a recent meeting in which students voiced dissatisfaction with the avenues for giving feedback about teaching to faculty, the issue was put on the monthly faculty meeting agenda for discussion. In the new format of faculty meetings, the issue became not just what forms should be used for eliciting feedback, but rather how can faculty and students be mutually accountable for the education that goes on in the classroom?

"How can faculty and students be mutually accountable for the education that goes on in the classroom?"

Last year, Phase Two of Project Colleague received funding from The Bush Foundation. This second phase, called the Teaching-Learning Network, not only continues the emphasis on collaborative efforts but also aims to increase our theoretical understanding of the difficulties and complexities involved in collaborative work in education. To begin this phase, we broadened our definition of who is considered an educator. We know that faculty are not the only educators on campus and education endeavors do not take place solely in the classroom. Our assumption, then, was that educators include not only faculty but also staff who work with students in cocurricular learning experiences; professionals in many fields who teach students in off-campus, community settings; and students who assume teaching roles through the Learning Center or other campus organizations. We

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My name is Sara Koch, and I am a 3rd-year theology student...

It has been my experience with the president and with several of the deans of this college that they are wholeheartedly supportive of the many different ways students express their Catholic and feminist identities within the walls of this institution. We have Women Oriented Women on campus as well as Feminists for Life; we have the College Republicans as well as a chapter of MPIRG. I have been very impressed at the lengths to which members of the administration have gone to assure individual groups their right to have a voice.

At the same time, I think the students are ambiguous and confused about just how much they can express themselves in the context of our Catholic identity because the college is ambiguous and confused as well. As a college, we do not come out very strongly publicly about either of our identities, because as much as we hate to admit it, this is a business, too, and we have a lot of people to try and please.

Hesitant prospective students concerned about the Catholic identity are assured by their student ambassadors that it's "not that big of a deal here," while at the same time the institutional advancement office is assuring worried benefactors that the college hasn't fallen off the radical end and that we really are still, indeed, Catholic.

As a student I am aware of the reality that the administration is between a rock and a hard place when it comes to claiming our identity. How does a college promote inclusivity of a 54 percent non-Catholic student body while at the same time remaining true to its Catholic identity and to its founding principles? While at the same time remaining true to its identity as a women's — and therefore feminist — college? After all, aren't Catholics and feminists opposite?

Not according to our founding mothers, the Sisters of St. Joseph. The first sisters began on the streets of France helping women in prostitution find economic liberation. This is both deeply feminist and deeply rooted in Catholic social commitment. The CSJs continue to model this example of dual identity today. I would like to see students have the opportunity to meet these women and ground their activism work in course work as a way of coming to know this image of Catholicism. Women have been working in the church for eons and there are Catholic women role models out there who ought to be a part of every student's understanding of the Catholic tradition because it challenges

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current perceptions. We have a tradition of our own as women who can provide students with another notion of what it means to be Catholic.

What I am talking about is allowing for many different images of what it means to be Catholic and many different images of what it means to be feminist all at the same time, even though the two may stand in contradiction with each other at times. This would ensure that students have the freedom to explore and express what kind of each they want to be.

One feminist strategy has been to invent new structures to replace patriarchal structures, which have tended to be polarizing and dualistic, rather than dialectic and collaborative. As a women's college in the context of a patriarchal culture, people keep wanting us to choose.

I would like to see us publicly refuse to choose, to allow colleges to be the complicated, controversial, contradictory, plain messy places that they ought to be, and stand firmly behind the chaos and justify it without hesitation to the public as being imperative to an environment of learners. This would not be a comfortable stance. We would constantly be grappling with issues. But I feel it is our obligation to be in a constant state of healthy tension about who we are, because it represents a truthful portrait of a diverse population.

This holds a tremendous amount of power for us as women and for us as an institution, because if we are truly committed to women in society, that means speaking truth to those in power, and that means claiming our diverse identities and allowing for them, in this place, in full view of the public world, not only for the benefit of students and those connected to the college, but for the benefit of the larger society to see this image of a Catholic women's college.

I am convinced that this is what many women are looking for if we are willing to come out strong and say this is what we are: Catholic and feminist both.

The above is an excerpt from a student presentation given to the Distinguished Women's Advisory Council at the College of St. Catherine March 10, 1995. The council serves to advise the college president regarding the direction the college may take in different areas. Ms. Koch addressed her experience as a student with regard to issues of identity the college faces.

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further assume that all of these people are learners as well as teachers.

Through the partnerships among these groups fostered by the Teaching-Learning Network, the college has begun a serious conversation about the nature of collaborative work in real-life settings, with all of the power differentials, deadlines, and conflicting interests that those settings entail. As we learned in our efforts at curricular reform, true collaboration is messy, often time-consuming, and always difficult.

We do not have final solutions to these problems and issues, but we are beginning to surface some key questions and to learn some of what is desirable in creating an environment conducive to civic education:

1. We have learned that we need to move beyond individual initiatives to institutional investment and involvement. Just as a top-down imposition of change does not work well, so individual initiatives are rarely enough. Much of what we have accomplished so far has been the result of individuals who are passionate about something and who join others to effect change. Often these efforts have been parallel to, or totally outside of, the existing college structure. While this stage has been productive, the time has come to change the structures themselves so that they encourage collaboration and public work, rather than act as obstacles. We have begun this process by examining the reward structures for faculty so that now collaborative research and curricular work count as scholarly activity. More, of course, needs to be done.

2. This difficult work will only be successful — indeed, will only happen — if those who represent the institution as a whole see its self-interest as being enhanced by a more civic, democratic environment. The president of the College of St. Catherine, Dr. Anita Pampusch, has challenged the college to become a "hotbed of ideas for discussion carried out in a civic manner" and a place where students and educators learn to "come to public judgment" (Boyte & Kari 1995).

3. We have learned the value of some things that are often overlooked in strategic plans and budget decisions. One is public space, an area where diverse groups of people can meet to discuss issues of common concern, where people who usually meet in hierarchical roles can come together as partners in a common enterprise, thereby sharing perspectives and discovering more

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about each other. This public space is especially important for faculty and students, as it offers a place outside of the classroom and all its traditional power relations.

4. As we learn the value of community forums, we also learn to appreciate individuals who hold memberships in multiple groups. These individuals can cross institutional dividing lines and share the perspectives of one group with several others. As Daryl Smith points out in the 1994 issue of *Higher Education Exchange*, work in one group is both informed and strengthened by active participation in others. She goes on to note that groups that encourage the full participation of people from various groups on campus are more likely to work collaboratively.

5. Most of all, we have learned and continue to learn the importance of a theoretical framework that can guide us in understanding and assessing our efforts at self-renewal. For us, the concept of public work functions as one such framework. Boyte and Kari define public work as "common work on public tasks by diverse groups of people tied to a broader purpose" (1995). At the College of St. Catherine, we are working toward redefining our common energies as public work by engaging in campuswide reforms that are collaborative and inclusive of diversive perspectives; that revitalize self-interest into a deeper sense of collective ownership; that allow expertise to be widely shared in joint problem solving; that connect our everyday work to a larger meaning; and that develop "civic values like accountability, discipline, and self-respect" (Boyte & Kari 1995).

Our continuing work is institutional renewal. We will, of course, never finish, but that is part of the joy and excitement of public work.

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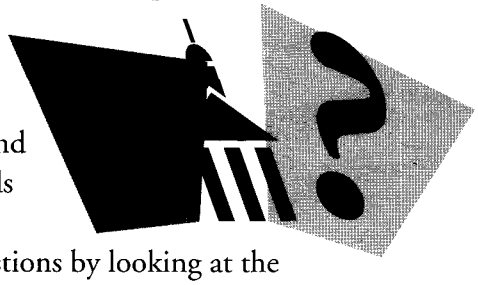
THE POLITICS OF DIVERSITY AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE:

Are Academics and the Public Out of Sync?

By David Mathews

This *Exchange* moves from the theme of its first issue (the state of civil discourse and civil life on campuses) to another related theme: the relation of higher education to the public and its problems (borrowing from Dewey). Historian Thomas Bender's thesis* that the academic order and the public realm have become disconnected, worlds apart, sets the stage for this second theme.

As for the first theme, I would like to take note of Joanne Cavallaro's essay on campus life. It makes a point so simple, so powerful, that we are left wondering why we miss it so often. Institutions of higher learning, Cavallaro argues, can't prepare their students for public life and civil discourse unless the members of the institution go about solving their problems in a manner that reflects the public practices they hope to teach. Her essay invites a follow-up question: Can colleges and universities prepare their students for public life without also providing direct experience in public problem solving? And is this direct experience likely if the academic order and the public realm are disconnected, worlds apart, or even just out of sync?



We might approach these new questions by looking at the imperatives of public life. The public has an array of problems: including life-threatening problems of crime, drugs, senseless violence, plus the social decay and economic deprivation that seem to spawn these pathologies. Let me give you an example of the imperatives that grow out of what are literally life-and-death struggles.

Grand Rapids, Michigan, is about as "American" as you can get: home of a President, a reputation for civic spirit, hardworking

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people, rich in values. Still, in Grand Rapids, as everywhere else, there are serious social and economic problems. Kids are killing kids. To decide what to do about this tragedy, citizens gathered in a series of public forums. The first meetings drew a school principal, several police officers, some high school students, a minister, and a woman who had lost two sons to random violence. One son had survived the dangers of military service only to die in his hometown in a drive-by shooting. In the course of the forum, the mother said, calmly and quietly, something that captures a growing feeling in America. If we are going to solve this problem, she said, "we've got to band together." She wasn't talking about the usual kind of joining together of one particular group around one particular issue. She was talking about the whole community coming together to deal with a problem affecting the entire community. She was talking about creating a different set of relationships in the community, a different way of working together. Increasingly, in city after city, people are coming to the same conclusion: nothing will change unless communities band together to act.

"Students don't know much about the politics of banding together."

This kind of banding together is a form of politics — one in which the public is a central actor. It's reasonable to ask if college students know about such politics. Why? Because they are going to live the rest of their lives in communities like Grand Rapids. Evidently students don't know much about the politics of banding together, according to a series of recent reports. Kettering's study, *College Students Talk Politics*, found that while most students were concerned and caring individuals, they knew very little about banding together as a public. Most didn't find it discussed in their classrooms and they certainly didn't see its deliberative qualities in the partisan rancor of governmental politics or campus debates.

Campus politics, even at its very best, seems occupied with internal issues, which often have to do with the just distribution of existing political goods. Who is to be admitted, the content of the curriculum, a place on lists of approved student organizations, nearly everything institutions have, is subject to questions of equitable distribution. Consequently, colleges and universities are necessarily concerned with diversity, that is, with whether particular individuals or groups have equal access to the goods that campuses have at their disposal.

Communities like Grand Rapids are also concerned with the

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distribution of existing goods, with issues of justice and equity. But today their survival compels them also to be concerned with another issue — the *creation* of political goods. Banding together is a political good. It is a state of civic readiness that is key to problem solving.

When institutions face questions about the fair distribution of existing goods, they encounter individuals or groups who claim a greater share of those goods based on the proposition that their circumstances are not the same as others and, because of those circumstances, they haven't had their fair share. Accentuating these distinct circumstances, arising from race, gender, or other factors — that is, accentuating diversity — makes the claim stronger. There is a premium on diversity. That is perfectly understandable. We could call that the politics of diversity.

On the other hand, when communities face the question of creating goods that don't exist and have to band together, they need a variety of different capacities to create the strongest possible bond. (Think of the way a metal is made stronger through alloying materials with different properties). We could call this the politics of difference. It is also perfectly understandable. Different capacities grow out of our different talents and experiences. And we need them all. Differences in experiences, for example, when compounded, serve to mitigate against what Michael Roth called the blind spots of any one experience.

I am making an artificial but important distinction between concerns with *diversity* and concerns with *difference,* between a concern with having a sufficiently diverse population of individuals as representatives of groups and a concern with joining together the different capacities of a community. Obviously the situations in which concerns with diversity arise are not the same as the situations in which the need for differences is uppermost. Creating political goods is not the same challenge as distributing them, and the first would seem to be a prerequisite to the second.

My purpose in distinguishing between diversity and difference is to pursue the question I raised initially, the relation between campus life and the larger public life. Surely, students have to know something about creating public goods in order to be useful to the communities where they will live. If academic concerns are out of sync with public imperatives, then students may

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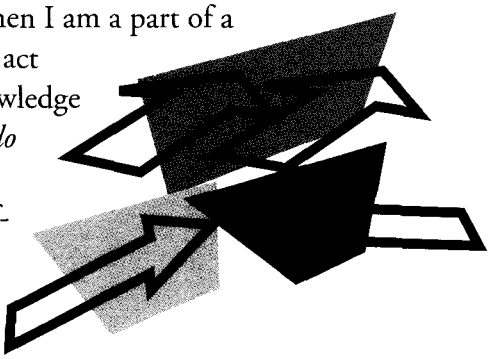
not be prepared for the politics of banding together. Undoubtedly, joining together with others on a campus is a first step, though hardly a substitute for experience with a larger community where a greater range of different capacities has to be brought together.

One obvious response to my question would be to argue that higher education has never been more engaged with the public and its problems. Institutions could cite all the technical assistance they provide or point to the growing emphasis in student service. Both are admirable. But are they sufficient? Communities trying to band together aren't asking for technical assistance, although I am sure that would be appreciated. And they aren't asking for service volunteers, though they would likely be welcomed. These communities want citizens who understand and can contribute to building public capacities. Without intending to, technical assistance and service reduce the public to a body of needs, to "those who don't have or know." Is there something that the academy has to offer other than what it knows, something that gives a public a greater capacity to act together?

I think there is. It is the *ways of knowing* that are cultivated in the academy, as contrasted with *what is known*, that rich collection of expert information stacked in libraries and extruded from electronic data bases.

I love libraries, marvel at data bases and, like most citizens, respect and use expert information. When I am a part of a public, however, joining with others to act together, I have to have more than knowledge *about*. I need to know what we *should do* when I am in a community with kids killing kids. For example, we/I need different perspectives because, when combined, they provide a better picture of the realities we have to face. To know together about how to act together we also have to call on those particular intellectual faculties. We have to call on those powers of the mind that allow us to examine ends and means simultaneously, to imagine consequences before we act, and to develop a practical wisdom that can fit different capacities into a stronger whole. Furthermore, I have to understand and be able to engage others in conversations that are best for thinking together,



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best for making shared judgments.

A small group of scholars (they happen to be in the humanities) are now testing the thesis that the natural fit of the academy and the public is around ways of knowing that are common to both. They are exploring the possibility that certain academic traditions of thinking about ends and means, of making judgments, of talking and thinking together are quite similar to the processes that a public uses. They are carrying on their "tests" in the most public of settings, in deliberative forums like those in Grand Rapids where people are trying to decide how to act together. Where scholars place themselves in relation to the public (in this case they are within the public) matters as much as what scholars do with the public, according to Jay Rosen. These humanists have put themselves in a setting that exposes them to questions that can't be addressed in a totally academic environment. What do they bring to public forums, other than expert information, and what role do they play when they aren't the teachers? Does the way they have been trained to know enable them to contribute to knowing the things a public has to know?

This experiment is being conducted by a number of state humanities councils and a network of public forums called the National Issues Forums. The Federation of State Humanities Councils and the National Endowment for the Humanities are playing supporting roles. The Kettering Foundation is a matchmaker and a source of research for this experiment in finding a better fit between the academy and the public.

Thomas Bender has, for some time, found enough historical examples to argue that the neat distinctions often made between academics and the public, as each goes about knowing, are neither neat nor distinct — much less desirable. The notion of a higher learning, as contrasted with technical training, seems ultimately tied to preparation for civic life and practice. Why do we need more than a vocational education? In part, because we live more than a vocational life: we live a larger civic life and we have to be educated for it. This suggests that higher learning, even in professional schools, has an organic and necessary relation to what goes on in the public sphere. So the humanities scholars in the public experiment aren't just providing a service that has nothing to do with what goes on in their classrooms. They should profit as schol-

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ars from being part of public politics. If this is so, the usual discussion of what the academy has to contribute to the public is too one-sided. We should be looking as well at what the public has to offer academe.

My first question of whether students could be prepared to be public leaders without a direct contact with the public now becomes part of a series of larger questions, such as whether the academic mind can retain its best qualities (as reflected in ways of knowing) without some ties to the public and its ways of knowing.

Not every scholar can find his or her public life in a forum, yet it may take some engagement with a text "out there" to give life to a text on the shelf. Maybe this or other publications will look at scholars who have "gone public" and what that experience has done to them and their scholarship. Let our editors hear from you.

*Bender, Thomas. 1993. *Intellect and Public Life: Essays on the Social History of Academic Intellectuals in the United States.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

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